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**CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**  
RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

# DESERT HOT SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

**Adopted September 5, 2000**

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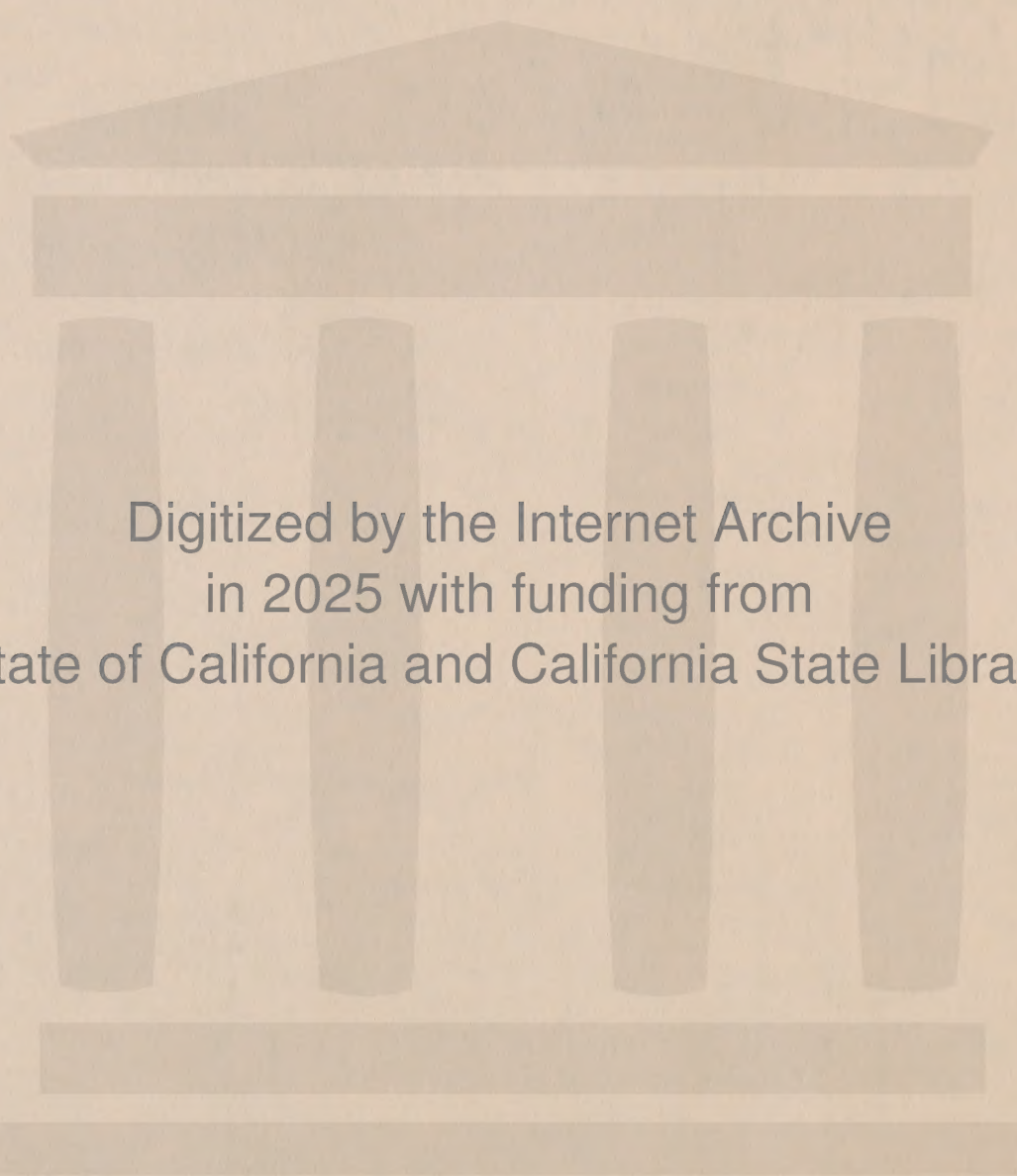
**CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS  
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**PREPARED BY**



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# CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS

## COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

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Palm Springs, CA 92262

Adopted September 5, 2000





# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

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# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN**

This introductory chapter of the General Plan provides the broadest overview of the General Plan, what it is, what information it contains and how it should be used. The chapter also summarizes the City's history and important features. The size of the planning area, the state of existing development and the community's valuable resources are also summarized and maps of the region and City boundaries are provided. The relationship of the General Plan to the Environmental Impact Report is explained.





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# INTRODUCTION

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## **DESERT HOT SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

All incorporated towns and cities, and all counties are required by the California Government Code to prepare comprehensive, long-term general plans, which direct development of the community. As an official document of the City of Desert Hot Springs, the General Plan provides the goals, policies and programs to guide the development of the City and to preserve its valued assets and resources. In addition to goals and policies, the General Plan includes issues discussions, diagrams and maps, tables and charts that provide direction for the prudent and conscientious management of future development.

The makeup and composition of the City of Desert Hot Springs are described in this section of the General Plan. It also describes the planning area which includes the City limits, and the regional context and long-term perspective taken by the City in developing this document. Finally, this brief chapter provides an overview of the General Plan and the Environmental Impact Report, and their role as the principal development guides for community development.

### **City of Desert Hot Springs**

The City of Desert Hot Springs comprises an established residential community with important vacation resorts centered on the City's unique hot water mineral springs resource. The City also provides community-scale commercial and business centers serving the City and surrounding communities. Located in the northwest portion of the Coachella Valley in Riverside County, the City is a transitional area between a more intense tourist commercial base to the south and southeast and the more rural and quasi-industrial windfarm development to the west.

Relatively isolated from surrounding development of other communities in the Coachella Valley, Desert Hot Springs must rely on its own resources and capabilities to meet the needs of its residents and local businesses. The City is also at a pivotal position in the setting of governmental policy for such issues as public safety and the conservation and preservation of our City's environment. The extremes in climate and the high geological activity of the region have shaped Desert Hot Springs and given it unique and valued characteristics that warrant our appreciation and protection.

Before considerable settlement of Europeans took place in the Coachella Valley in the latter part of the 19th century, for millennia before that time, Native Indians of the Serrano and associated clans, and their ancestors, shared this region and its resources. It was not until the middle 20th century that Desert Hot Springs began to expand into a city. Today, it is a center for spa hotels and hot mineral spring therapy, as well as a center of massage and holistic health.

The City of Desert Hot Springs encompasses 14,782+ acres or over 23 square miles. The City's Sphere-of-Influence (SOI), County managed lands over which the City has an advisory role, totals another 32.5 square miles. Development over the past decades has been focused within the existing urban growth area and in the north-central portion of the City. Approval of new residential and resort development has been predominantly in the western portions of the City and at the eastern end of Pierson Boulevard. Newly annexed lands provide an opportunity for community-scale commercial and a wide range of residential densities, with wind energy lands located in the extreme southwest corner of the City and in its Sphere-of-Influence. Unincorporated City SOI lands are primarily located south of the incorporated city limits, with important and developable sphere lands also located to the east.



The City is situated on an upper valley plain and mountain foothills within the widening low desert Coachella Valley, which ranges from one to about ten miles wide. The San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains bound the City on the west and north, respectively. The extensive alluvial plains formed by drainage from these mountains form the elevated valley on which most of the City has developed. The adjoining mountains and the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains to the southwest and south, respectively, also provide dramatic and valuable viewsheds. The City is a geographically and biologically important location, where significantly differing wildlife habitat, landscape and geology meet.

This General Plan for Desert Hot Springs reflects the City's appreciation for the quality of desert living the community has to offer and a determination to protect it. The Plan also reflects and acts on the new opportunities for community and economic development. As part of a strategy to broaden the City's economic base, the primary environmental resources, including the hot mineral springs which gave birth to the City, must be protected. Simply, the community's highest values go hand in hand; appreciating and protecting the built and natural environments are two sides of the same coin.

### **The General Plan and Environmental Impact Report**

The Comprehensive General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have been developed to serve as a framework for decision-making regarding the appropriate types and intensities of land use, and conditions by which development is to be permitted in the City. The process of preparing these documents must involve thoughtful and extensive community consultation, including the identification of issues, and the development of goals, policies, and programs. It also involves the consideration of various alternatives, the consensus selection of a preferred course of action, and finally, the development of strategies to implement the General Plan.

As required by state law, each jurisdiction must prepare and adopt a General Plan and supporting documentation to provide the basis for the community's development. The Plan identifies the environmental, social and economic goals, and sets forth policies, standards and programs for existing and future development. The General Plan also provides the framework to analyze and respond to changing circumstances as the City evolves.

The background information and issues are summarized in the General Plan and are discussed in greater depth in the General Plan EIR. Therefore, both documents provide City officials and the general public with vital information necessary to make informed decisions. The General Plan and the EIR also serve as the basis for subsequent planning efforts, including the preparation of Specific Plans and special environmental and planning studies.

### **The General Plan Process**

The City's previous General Plan was last comprehensively undated in 1986-87 and adopted in October, 1987. Based upon a need to respond to recent social, economic, physical and political conditions, the City Council determined that a comprehensive update to the General Plan was necessary. In December, 1996, the City Council approved a process for the review and updating of the General Plan, which included proposed community participation objectives and techniques, a proposed committee to recommend General Plan goals and policies, an identification of needed staff and consultant resources, and a preliminary schedule and budget.

### **General Plan Advisory Committee**

The Planning Commission and City Council appointed a fifteen member General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to serve as the primary means of citizen involvement in the formulation of the draft General Plan. Beginning in April, 1997, the GPAC met publicly twice monthly to discuss and review draft General Plan elements and their goals,



policies and programs. The GPAC also took City-wide field trips in an effort to obtain a better understanding of community conditions and opinions.

Between April and September of 1997, the General Plan Advisory Committee held 12 public meetings during which staff and consultant presentations were followed by preliminary votes to adopt, modify or reject proposed goals, policies and programs. The proposed land use map designations received the most amount of citizen input and GPAC discussion during the meetings. The final version of the Preferred Alternative was selected in November, 1999. Special newspaper notices were published in an effort to inform the public of proposed changes to be considered in the General Plan. The recommendations of the GPAC were forwarded to the Planning Commission and City Council for their review and adoption.

### **General Plan Format**

The General Plan is organized into five major chapters: Administration, Community Development, Environmental Resources, Environmental Hazards, and Public Services and Facilities. Within each chapter are the various General Plan elements and their accompanying background information, goals, policies and programs.

### **Goals, Policies and Programs**

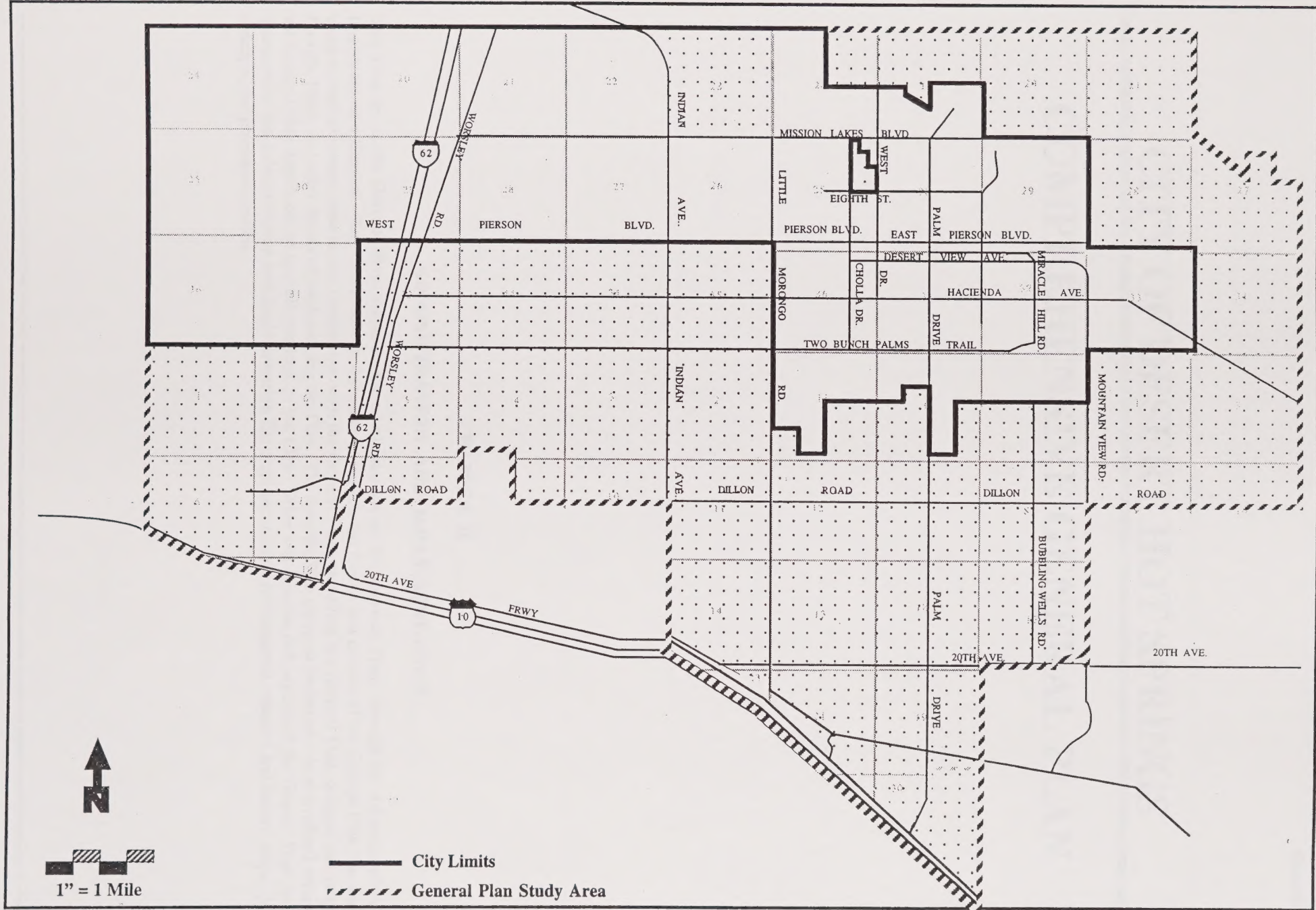
Each element contains at least one goal statement and related policy statements and programs. A goal in the General Plan is the most general statement of community values expressed as a desirable end-state condition to be achieved in the future. The heart of the General Plan is contained within its policy statements. Policies further refine the goal statements and provide a clear direction for decision-making. Policies frequently include "shall" statements to provide unequivocal directives. Decision-making criteria, major development standards and funding priorities are best established by clear General Plan policies. General Plan programs are included as implementation measures needed to carry out related policy statements.

Programs provide the basis for scheduling and assigning staff and other resources to specific actions which are needed to implement certain directives of the Plan.

The maps and graphics which are included in the General Plan illustrate policies. For example, the land use map represents a series of policies for the type and intensity of future development to occur at various locations throughout the City.







**TERRA NOVA**®  
Planning & Research, Inc.

**City of Desert Hot Springs  
General Plan  
Planning Area Map**



**Exhibit**

**I-1**





# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER II**

#### **ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

This Chapter of the General Plan addresses the administration of the General Plan, through the Administration and Implementation Element. Key discussions in this element include the format and content of the General Plan, the various chapters and elements, determining consistency with the General Plan, amending the General Plan, purpose and scope of Specific Plans, and other means of implementing the Plan. The Specific Plan plays an important role as a refined version of the General Plan applicable to specific portions of the City. Other components and aspects of the General Plan are also discussed in the Administration and Implementation Element, including environmental resource and hazard maps, design concepts, and procedural matters.





# ADMINISTRATION ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The Administration Element provides background on the information set forth in the General Plan, its organization, the Plan's function and its relationship to other regulatory documents, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Subdivision Map Act, and the City Zoning Ordinance. The Administration Element also describes General Plan review and amendment procedures. It is the intent of this Element to describe the various means by which the General Plan is implemented, including Element-specific implementation strategies, which are incorporated throughout the General Plan. The Element also sets forth goal, policies and programs intended to effectively administer the General Plan.

## BACKGROUND

The Administration Element provides for the periodic review and amendment of the General Plan, establishing formal procedures to ensure that the Plan is maintained and kept current with changing conditions, and that it continues to reflect the goals of the community as a whole. The Element also facilitates the review and processing of land use and development proposals, the appropriateness of which are determined through a review of applicable policies and standards for consistency with the General Plan.

California Government Code (Section 65300) requires that incorporated communities and counties prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan which regulates the physical development of lands under the jurisdiction of, or having an influence upon, the community, including the City's legally recognized Sphere-of-Influence. The General Plan and its various elements are required to function as an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies (Government Code Section 65300.5).

It is also recognized that special local conditions and circumstances must be accommodated and that the General Plan may take differing forms, while meeting its minimum requirements (Government Code Section 65300.7). The General Plan must be designed to be responsive to the variations in community size and density, fiscal and administrative capabilities, land use and development issues, and the needs of each community's residents (Government Code Sections 65300.9, 65302).

## Format and Content

The Desert Hot Springs General Plan is organized into five major chapters: Administration, Community Development, Environmental Resources, Environmental Hazards, and Public Services and Facilities. Within each chapter are the various General Plan Elements, providing background information and related issues, goals and specific policies.

The Desert Hot Springs General Plan is strongly supported by programs set forth in each element, that reflect the community's proactive philosophy of local government. These have been consolidated and elaborated upon to provide implementation strategies to facilitate long-term planning and infrastructure development.

## Goals, Policies, and Programs

The General Plan goals are developed as broad statements reflecting the City's values, aims and aspirations. These goals address the physical development of the City, as well as the preservation of the community's important environmental and cultural assets. The policies have been developed to further the goals of the General Plan, and set forth specific performance requirements for each element. Programs accompanying the elements provide quantitative and qualitative targets, set forth the agencies most likely to carry out the program, and propose possible schedules for program implementation and review.



## Maps and Graphics

Official maps and graphics are incorporated into the General Plan to delineate land use and circulation patterns, scenic highways, community focal points, open space and recreation facilities, and areas requiring special consideration or study. Important or significant environmental resource and hazard areas are also mapped, as well as public and quasi-public facilities. These official maps carry equal authority to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

## The Elements

California Government Code Section 65302 establishes the seven (7) mandatory elements of the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise. It is recognized that some of the required elements may be addressed in combination with other complementary elements, such as Open Space and Conservation.

All of the mandated elements are found within the Desert Hot Springs General Plan. This document integrates the mandatory and discretionary elements into five (5) major chapters, organized to reflect compliance with State requirements that the General Plan be internally consistent, comprising an integrated and compatible statement of policies for the City. Each element of the General Plan has equal legal authority.

### *Community Development Chapter*

The Community Development chapter most directly affects the character and quality of life of the community through the distribution of land uses, the intensity of commercial and other development, densities and types of housing, roadway and circulation plans, the provision of parks and recreational facilities, the establishment of architectural and community design guidelines, the preservation of scenic vistas, and the development, preservation and enhancement of a healthy economy. This chapter includes the following General Plan elements:

## Community Development

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Community Design
- Economic and Fiscal

### *Environmental Resources Chapter*

The resources of the physical natural environment, including man-made artifacts of historical or archaeological significance, biological resources, open space and conservation and other natural resources and described in this chapter. Goals and policies are set forth within each element to assure the preservation and enhancement of the physical environment and resources as important assets of the community. The Environmental Resources chapter includes the following elements:

## Environmental Resources

- Archaeological and Historic Resources
- Biological Resources
- Water Resources
- Air Quality
- Energy and Mineral Resources
- Open Space and Conservation

### *Environmental Hazards Chapter*

The hazards of the physical environment, including man-made hazardous conditions and toxic materials, are described in this chapter. Within each Element, goals and policies are set forth which identify specific hazards and means of assuring the protection of public health, safety and welfare. Hazards of particular concern to the City are given special attention in this chapter. The Environmental Hazards chapter of the General Plan includes the following elements:

## Environmental Hazards

- Geotechnical (Seismic Safety, Soils and Erosion)
- Flooding and Hydrology
- Noise
- Hazardous and Toxic Materials



### *Public Services and Facilities Chapter*

The principal concern of local government is the long-term provision of adequate levels of essential public facilities and services. Goals and policies are set forth in each element to assure an adequate level of services and facilities congruent with the level of development anticipated in the City. The Public Services and Facilities chapter of the General Plan includes the following elements:

#### **Public Services and Facilities**

- Public Utilities
- Fire and Police Protection
- Schools and Libraries
- Health Services
- Emergency Preparedness
- Public Buildings and Facilities
- Arts and Culture

### **Using The General Plan**

Frequently described as the “constitution” of the City, the General Plan is the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based. The Plan is a comprehensive information and planning guide established by State law to provide a framework for making informed decisions about the future of the community. The Plan identifies the community’s land use, circulation, environmental, economic and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development. The General Plan, and supporting environmental documentation, identify concerns and issues important to the community, analyze them, and establish goals, policies, and program implementation measures, which resolve these issues. It also provides the basis for a rational nexus to support development, mitigation measures and exactions. Special studies and performance programs are also integral parts of the goals, policies, programs which assure effective implementation of the General Plan.

### **Consistency with the General Plan**

Whether developer or City initiated, proposals for development must be analyzed and tested for consistency with the goals, policies, and programs in every applicable element of the General Plan. On an on-going basis, the City must assure and maintain consistency of the General Plan with adopted Specific Plans and the City Zoning Ordinance. This test of General

Plan compliance is also a required criteria for determining significant impacts under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### **Interpretation of the General Plan**

In any case where uncertainty exists regarding the location of boundaries of any land use category, proposed public facility symbol, circulation alignment, or other symbol or line found on the official maps, the following procedures will be used to resolve such uncertainty.

Boundaries shown in the General Plan and on official maps as approximately following the limits of any municipal corporation are to be construed as following these limits. Boundaries shown as following or approximately following section lines, half or quarter section lines shall be construed as following such lines.

Boundaries shown as following or approximately following the centerline of streams, creeks, rivers, or other continuously or intermittently flowing streams or creeks are to be construed as following the channel centerline of these water courses taken at mean low water, and, in the event of natural change in the location of such streams or other water courses, the zone boundary is to be construed as moving with the channel centerline.

Where a land use category applied to a parcel is not mapped to include an adjacent street or alley, the category shall be considered to extend to the centerline of the right of way. Boundaries shown as separated from, parallel, or approximately parallel to any of the features listed above shall be construed to be parallel to such features and at such distances therefrom as are shown on the map. Symbols that indicate appropriate locations for proposed public facilities are not property specific. They indicate only the general area within which a specific facility should be established.



## **CEQA Review of Consistency**

State CEQA Guidelines require that an initial study include "an examination of whether the project is compatible with existing zoning and plans." The State CEQA Guidelines further stipulate that, "A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located." If a determination is made by the Planning Commission or the City Council that the proposed action is inconsistent with the General Plan, no further action shall be taken without the completion and processing of an EIR or other detailed analysis which would support a finding of overriding consideration.

## **Zoning Consistency**

California State law also mandates that the City's Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. In the event that the Zoning Ordinance becomes inconsistent with the General Plan by reason of a General Plan Amendment, the Zoning Ordinance must be amended within a reasonable time so that it is made consistent with the General Plan, as amended. The Zoning Ordinance cannot be amended if it causes an inconsistency with the General Plan.

## **Amending The General Plan**

Rather than a static document, the General Plan is dynamic and multi-faceted, continuously defining and addressing the changing needs of the community. It is also based on an on-going assessment and understanding of existing and projected community needs. To assure that the General Plan is kept current, short-term programs and policies may be reviewed annually to reflect compatibility with budgetary priorities and related program status. Long-term programs and implementation measures must also be given forward planning consideration to assure timely funding and development of critical infrastructure and public services and facilities.

## **Annual Review**

California Government Code requires that the planning agency "render an annual report to the legislative body (City Council) on the status of the Plan and the progress in its implementation" (Section 65400(b)). State law further requires that the Housing Element be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years.

Mandatory elements of the General Plan may be amended up to four (4) times in each calendar year. The City Council or any citizen may initiate a General Plan Amendment. It is left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction to establish an amendment schedule to be published one year in advance.

## **Application Procedures**

Applications for the amendment of the General Plan and the appropriate fees are filed with the City Community Development Department. An amendment to the General Plan constitutes a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and therefore is evaluated for its environmental effects and consistency with other elements of the General Plan. Final approval of General Plan amendments is the responsibility of the City Council.

## **Exemptions**

The State Legislature has recognized that occasions arise which require the local jurisdiction to have some flexibility in amending the General Plan. As set forth in the California Government Code, the following are exempt from the General Plan amendment schedule.

- (1) Amendments requested and determined necessary for the development of a residential project, of which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of its units will be available to persons of low or moderate income (Sections 65361(b) and 65358(d)).
- (2) Any amendment necessary to comply with a court decision in a case involving the legal adequacy of the General Plan (Sections 65361 and 65358 (d) (1)).



## **Specific Plans**

A Specific Plan plays an important role as a refined version of the General Plan, applicable to a specific portion of the community. Specific Plans often provide detailed design and analysis of complex mixed-use projects, and indicate precise land use locations and designs. Specific Plans contain text, exhibits, and diagrams indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses and the necessary public and private urban support systems, including streets, utilities and drainage facilities.

The standards and criteria by which development and, where applicable, conservation will proceed on the property are also defined in the Specific Plan. Additionally, a Specific Plan provides a program of implementation measures and financing necessary to carry out the project. It must also be consistent with all facets of the General Plan and in turn, zoning, subdivision, and public works projects must be consistent with an existing Specific Plan (Government Code Section 65455).

Development proposals on lands designated with the Specific Plan overlay on the Land Use Map must also be processed through the submittal of a Specific Plan. Larger complex development proposals may also be required to process a Specific Plan. Specific Plans are prepared, adopted and amended in the same manner as a General Plan, may be adopted by resolution or ordinance, and may be amended as often as deemed necessary by the City Council. Development proposals within areas designated with a Specific Plan overlay on the General Plan Land Use Map cannot proceed until a Specific Plan has been prepared and adopted by the City Council.

In areas where the Specific Plan encompasses more than one property, the plan must be completed and adopted prior to development on any affected property. Specific Plans may be prepared either by the applicant or the City. Should the City prepare the Specific Plan, it is entitled to reimbursement by affected property owners pursuant to Section 65456 of the California Government Code.

## **Capital Facilities**

Among the statutory responsibilities of California, incorporated towns, cities and counties is to "annually review the capital improvement program of the city or county and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan." Also, pursuant to Government code Section 65401, all departments within the City and all other local government agencies must submit a list of proposed projects to the City. The City is responsible for reviewing these projects for conformity with the General Plan.

## **Implementation of the General Plan**

California Government Code Section 65103(c) requires that local jurisdictions implement the General Plan once it has been adopted. The Desert Hot Springs General Plan relies on element programs and implementation strategies, as well as the related mitigation measures and programs set forth in the General Plan Program EIR, to serve as implementation measures. The City Zoning Ordinance also plays a critical role in implementing the goals and policies of the Plan, and Specific Plans provide detailed implementation programs for specific portions of the General Plan area.

## **Implementation Through the Zoning Ordinance**

The Zoning Ordinance is an exercise of police powers granted to the City by the State, and is the primary tool for implementing the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance regulates land use by distinct development zones and permitted uses. Text, maps, diagrams and other materials describe the distribution and intensity of land uses into such categories as residential, commercial and industrial uses. Written regulations establish minimum development standards for each of the land use zones in a manner consistent with the General Plan. Permitting processes set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, including Conditional Use Permits, Variances, Architectural Reviews and other land use permitting, also implement the General Plan. The implementation of the General Plan is further regulated by Government Code Sections 65800 et. seq.



## **Implementation Through the Subdivision Ordinance**

Like Zoning Ordinances, subdivision regulation is also an exercise of police powers and a principal instrument for implementing the General Plan. Establishing state-wide uniformity in local subdivision procedures, the State Subdivision Map Act (Government Code Sections 66410 et seq.) leaves the standards for regulating the design and improvement of subdivision to local government.

The broadest authority for regulating subdivisions lies in Government Code Sections 66473.5, 66474, 66474.60, and 66474.61, requiring findings that, among other things, the subdivision is consistent with the City General Plan and any applicable Specific Plan.

## **Development Agreements**

State law provides for the adoption of development agreements between a project proponent and the City, in accordance with Government Code Section 65865 et seq. The purpose of development agreements is to provide developers with additional assurances that development approvals will not be nullified by some future local policy or regulation change. In exchange, the developer may be required to meet certain conditions or performance criteria which become part of the agreement.

Development agreements can be a useful means of meeting General Plan goals and policies, while removing some of the risks faced by developers. Agreements can remain in effect for a few or several years, the term typically being set forth in the agreement.

It is important to emphasize that, as set forth in Government Code Section 65866, the City, unless otherwise provided by the development agreement, is not prevented from applying new rules, regulations, and policies which do not conflict with those rules, regulations, and policies applicable to that property. Neither is the City prevented from denying or conditionally approving any subsequent development project application on the basis of such existing or new rules, regulations or policies.

## **Commissions and Committees**

The City is also empowered to establish advisory commissions or committees, which may be comprised of public officials as well as private individuals, to review and make recommendations on policies or programs facilitating implementation of the General Plan. These commissions typically address such issue areas as parks and recreation, trails, libraries, public safety, community and architectural design, affordable housing and emergency preparedness. The City Council may establish commissions or committees to address specific and focused issues, or to provide recommendations on an on-going basis. The Council may perpetuate or dissolve these commissions or committees as it sees fit.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The Administration Element is essential to the effective enactment of the General Plan. The Plan relies on the development and maintenance of City regulatory documents, including the Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plan requirements, the Subdivision Ordinance, and City Rules for the Implementation of CEQA. The General Plan itself is a living document with mandates for frequent review and refinement. Amendments to the Plan should be given careful consideration and not be granted casually. The goal, policies, programs and implementation strategies of the Element will help to assure the effective administration and implementation of all elements of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan.

## **ADMINISTRATION GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Comprehensive and integrated administration and implementation of all elements of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan through consistent and effective policies and programs.



### **Policy 1**

Provide for the periodic revision and updating of the General Plan and ensure that associated City ordinances, including the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, are maintained in conformance with the General Plan.

### **Program 1 A**

The City Council shall, through the public hearing process, receive an annual report from the Planning Commission on the status of the General Plan and shall make recommendations which address identified inadequacies or opportunities for updating the Plan.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Annually.

### **Program 1 B**

The City shall comprehensively review and amend, as necessary, the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to maintain consistency with the General Plan.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission City Council

**Schedule:** Annually

### **Policy 2**

The City shall provide for the use of Specific Plans as a preferred method of detailed and systematic implementation of the General Plan.

### **Program 2 A**

Maintain application materials and guidelines for the preparation of specific plans and encourage their use for large and/or complex residential, commercial or industrial projects of twenty acres or larger and on lands contemplated for annexation into the City.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 3**

On a periodic and on-going basis, the City shall examine and review the long-term implications of General Plan policies and programs as they relate to the City's ability to provide public services and facilities.

### **Program 3 A**

The annual review of the General Plan, as set forth in Program 1.A, above, shall include a report on interrelationships, impacts or enhancements of the General Plan with regard to the City's ability to fund public services or secure public facilities.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Annually.

### **Policy 4**

The City shall establish and maintain a cooperative planning process with Riverside County, assuring an effective advisory role regarding any and all development and land use planning issues proposed within or in close proximity to the City's Sphere-of-Influence.

### **Program 4 A**

Effectively coordinate and cooperate with Riverside County to review all proposed land use and other development proposals, recognize the City's advisory role, and request that the County forward copies of all development plans proposed within the advisory area to the City for review and comment.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department; City Attorney

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 5**

The City shall assure that properly filed development applications shall be processed in an expeditious and timely manner.

### **Program 5 A**

The City shall maintain application processing procedures that assure expeditious and timely processing of land development applications, including "fast tracking" procedures for priority development proposals.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

Master facility and similar plans shall be utilized by the City to address the recreation, drainage/flood control, infrastructure, utility management, traffic control, and other facility needs of the community.



### **Program 6 A**

The City shall develop master facility plans to establish availability of, need and availability of funding for additional public services and facilities. Master plans should also include schedules for phased implementation, which shall be incorporated into the City's capital improvement programs.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Public Works Department; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02; as required by development.

### **Policy 7**

The City shall encourage in-fill development within already urbanized areas of the corporate boundaries of the City, and expansion of new development shall be logically phased and, as appropriate, guided by the development of existing and new Specific Plans.

### **Policy 8**

City shall provide opportunities for review and comment on development proposals through public hearing notices sent to owners of property located at least within 300 feet of development proposal sites.

### **Policy 9**

City projects shall comply with the same policies, procedures and regulations required of the private sector.



# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The Community Development chapter includes the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Parks and Recreation, Community Design, and Economic and Fiscal Development. This chapter significantly influences the character and quality of life in the community, the distribution of land uses, the intensity and types of housing, the provision of parks and recreational facilities, the establishment of architectural and community design guidelines, the preservation of scenic vistas, and the preservation and enhancement of a healthy economy.





# LAND USE ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The Land Use Element provides a comprehensive plan of the general allocation and distribution of land uses throughout the City. The element serves as a statement of the standards and targets for residential population density and building intensity. The Land Use Element also identifies areas planned for commercial and industrial uses, and areas of existing and planned public and quasi-public uses. It is the broadest of the elements and is the basis for coherent land use policy development.

## BACKGROUND

This element is the primary focus of the General Plan, incorporating all of the principles of community and land use planning which are applied to the drafting and adoption of a comprehensive, long-term General Plan of land uses for the physical development of the City. The process of developing the land use plan involves the analysis of existing land use patterns, current and future available public services and facilities, and consideration of physical environmental constraints and opportunities on development.

Government Code Section 65300 requires every city and county to prepare and adopt "a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development" of the community. The City General Plan is further required to provide a land use element that designates lands for housing, business, industry, open space, as well as other uses deemed appropriate by the City (Government Code Sections 65302(a) and 65303). Although all the General Plan Elements are important, the Land Use Element is generally considered to be the most representative of and essential to the General Plan. In practice, the Land Use Element is of the broadest scope and the most widely used in the General Plan, with goals, policies and programs set forth to guide and direct the physical development of the community.

The Land Use Element is the essential General Plan component with direct and indirect relationships to all other elements. One of the most closely related of these is the Circulation Element, which is directly affected by and has a constraining effect upon the viability of the Land Use Element. The General Plan Guidelines and case law require a close and logical correspondence between these two elements. Other elements with strong dependence upon the Land Use Element and its land allocation model include Housing, Community Design, and Economic Development, as well as those elements recognizing the environmental hazards and resources of the community. Policies and programs associated with each of the major land use categories are set forth in the Land Use Element and reflect the compatible and integrally planned distribution of land uses reflected in the Plan.

### Types of Land Uses

The Land Use Element and accompanying land use map describe and designate the distribution of land uses by type, location, intensity and/or extent of use. Uses to be considered are diverse and include: residential, commercial, industrial, open space, recreation, public buildings and facilities, and other categories of public and private land uses.

Prior to the adoption of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan comprehensive update, the City utilized the land use designations and assignments adopted in the 1987 Plan. A comprehensive assessment of existing land uses and their distribution was conducted using field surveys, aerial photo analysis and a comprehensive computer mapping system. Based upon this analysis, a revised land use model was developed by the City General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). Table III-1 provides a description of the City's General Plan land use designations, and Table III-2 provides the statistical summary of these land uses. Following the tables, overall land use goals, policies and programs are presented. A discussion of each major land use category is also presented, followed by related goals, policies and programs.



### Role of the Element

The development of a community Land Use Element requires the broadest consideration of the issues addressed in all the other General Plan Elements. It clarifies and addresses most of the concerns of the community's development and plays an essential role in synthesizing all land use issues.

**Table III-1**  
**City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan**  
**Proposed Land Use Designations**

| <b>Land Use Designation (Density)</b>        | <b>Purpose of Land Use</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| (R-E) Residential Estates (0-1 du/varies ac) | This designation provides for single-family residential development on lots varying from one to 10 acre minimum in size. This land use provides intermediate steps in development density between more typical open space lands and low residential densities, providing lots sufficient for rural and estate lifestyle yet with room to limit site and environmental impacts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| (R-L) Low Density Residential (0-5 du/ac)    | <p>This low density designation provides for single-family residential development on individual lots of not less than 9,000 sq. ft. These lands serve to buffer more dense residential development from estate residential uses, and may be appropriate in areas with some site constraints.</p> <p>This designation typically provides for moderately low density single family subdivisions and Planned Residential Developments (PRDs). It serves to transition between lower and more moderate (medium) residential densities.</p> <p><b>Planned Residential Developments (PRDs)</b> are master planned communities which consolidate areas for structures, common open space and recreation areas, and integrate access and private internal roadways. PRDs permit the transfer of densities from open space/recreation areas, thus preserving open space and possibly permitting the development to maximize allowable densities.</p> <p>The purpose of PRDs is to promote planned residential development and amenities beyond those expected under conventional development. They are also meant to provide</p> |



greater flexibility in design, varying ranges in densities, and to encourage well planned neighborhoods through creative and imaginative planning. PRDs also provide for an appropriate mix of housing types, which are unique in their physical characteristics to warrant special methods of residential development. A full range of residential development is permitted in PRDs.

**(R-M) Medium Density Residential (0-8 du/ ac)**

Appropriate residential development under this designation includes single family and PRDs with shared open space, recreation and other amenities. Condominiums, garden apartments and affordable housing may also be appropriate for these lands. The intent of this designation is to encourage development of a wide variety of dwelling unit types.

**(R-MH) Residential Mobilehome (0-10 du/ac)**

This land use designation is assigned to existing mobilehome parks and subdivisions, and also provides for new mobilehome developments on thoughtfully considered lands. Projects developed under this designations should be integrated and planned developments within a minimum planning area of 2.5 acres, although larger sites are preferred.

**(R-H) High Density Residential (0-14 du/ac)**

This designation allows for the greatest diversity of residential development, including attached single and multi-family dwellings. This designation is most suitable for planned communities and affordable and senior housing, where smaller units and higher densities may be appropriate. Duplex and multiplex development is the most common and provides for Prds comprised of a varying range of residential types, including apartments and condominiums. Mobile home parks or subdivisions with PRDS type development may also allowed with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

**(R-VS) Residential-Visitor Serving (varies du/ac)**

This land use designation recognizes the predominant residential character of lands which also include numerous spa-type hotels. It is meant to foster compatible development to serve permanent and seasonal residents, as well as the vacationing public visiting resorts, hotels and motels. To this end, this designation is followed by a suffix (L, M & H) designating permitted residential densities.



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## Commercial

### (C-N) Neighborhood Commercial

This designation provides for neighborhood scale shopping centers conveniently located near residential areas. These developments are typically anchored by supermarkets and super drugstores. A wide range of other uses, including banking, barbers/beauty salons, dry cleaners, restaurants, service businesses, offices and other related activities are typically found in these planned centers. Typical sizes are 8 to 10 acres providing approximately 80,000 to 100,000 square feet of gross leasable floor area.

### (C-G) General Commercial

These lands includes a wide variety of smaller commercial centers, specialty retail shops, a broad range of clothing and apparel, jewelry stores and a variety of personal service businesses. Smaller, moderately priced department stores may also be appropriate under this designation. Development may range from free-standing retail buildings, offices and restaurants, to planned commercial centers. Typical sizes range between 2 to 8 acres with gross leasable square footage varying with uses. Hotels and motels may also be appropriate on these lands.

### (C-C) Community Commercial

This designation provides for larger, community scale shopping centers and malls, which may be anchored by several department stores or other large-scale anchors. A variety of retail outlets, and restaurant and entertainment uses are also typical. Hotels and motels may also be appropriate on these lands. Office development may also be an integral part of these developments. Typical sizes range between 100-300,000 square feet or more of gross leasable floor area. This type of development requires approval of a Specific Plan. While smaller than regional facilities, the community commercial center will serve the entire community, as well as the surrounding market area.

### (---/SP) Specific Plan Overlay

This designation is used in conjunction with other underlying designations. It requires the development of a Specific Plan of Land Use on parcels or groups of parcels of 40 acres or more. The designation is applied as an overlay on the General Plan Land Use Map and can be added to any land use designation.



It is also appropriate as a means of processing community-scale commercial and mixed use development proposals.

Specific Plans provide detailed design and analysis of large scale and/or complex projects indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses. They also examine the required level of public facilities and services and their availability, and they should help establish economic viability of proposed developments. Several Specific Plans have been adopted and shall be shown on the Land Use Map.

#### Pierson Boulevard Specific Plan Overlay

This area-specific land use planning corridor is limited to that portion of Pierson Boulevard extending from Atlantic Avenue westward to Highway 62, and extending one-half mile north and south of this portion of Pierson Boulevard. The Pierson Boulevard Specific Plan corridor encourages the preparation of mixed-use development plans within this planning area. Development proposals in the corridor requesting approval of more than one type of land use are required to submit Specific Plans for consideration by the City. Development proposals limited only to the underlying land use designation need not prepare a Specific Plan if planning areas are less than 40 acres in size.

---

### Industrial

#### (I-L) Light Industrial

This designation provides for business parks and the development of any and all industrial uses operating entirely in enclosed buildings, and those requiring limited and screenable outdoor storage. Examples include clean manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution facilities, mini-warehouse storage, and a variety of light manufacturing businesses. Siting industrial lands in close proximity to major regional highways is also desirable. Preferred development includes master planned business and industrial parks with integrated access and internal circulation.

#### (I-M) Medium Industrial

This designation allows development of more intense industrial uses with the potential to generate substantial levels of noise, smoke, dust, glare, traffic vibration or other nuisance. Examples include the manufacturing of durable goods such as appliances, furniture, fabricated metal products, and light electrical and transportation equipment. These uses



may also have greater dependence on outdoor storage. Proponents will be required to mitigate any adverse impacts to acceptable or insignificant levels, demonstrate conformance with all community environmental standards, and be compatible with existing and planned land uses.

(I-E) Energy-Related Industrial

This land use designation provides for the development of energy producing industries, including windfarms and solar photovoltaic or thermal arrays on an industrial scale. Proposed development must demonstrate compatibility with surrounding uses, and must be especially sensitive to nearby residential development. Other appropriate uses may include those incidental to energy production or transmission, as well as those which do not impair development of energy resources, including plant nurseries and non-structural recreation such as golf courses.

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**Institutional Services and Facilities**

(P) Public/Quasi-Public

As noted herein and on the Land Use Map, this designation provides for City Hall, other City and governmental offices, libraries, schools, hospitals, police and fire stations, utility substations, as well as other public/quasi-public administrative offices.

**Institutional Symbols**

(P/CH)

City Hall

(P/FS) Fire Station

Fire Station

(P/PS) Police Station

Police Station

(P/H) Hospital

Hospitals and similar in/out patient medical services. Also may be assigned to convalescent and skilled nursing facilities.

(P/S)

Provides for educational facilities such as day care, elementary, intermediate, high schools, special schools and technical schools.

(P/L)

Libraries

(P/PO)

Post Offices

(P/U)

Utility Substation- designates electric, gas, telephone, water and other similar facilities.

(T)

Designated major transportation corridors.



## Open Space

### (OS) Open Space

This designation is assigned to those lands which constitute special, important or valuable natural resources that warrant protection. The designation is assigned to such lands as parks, which carry a designation of OS/PP; golf courses/pool areas/landscaped lands are defined as private open space with a designation of OS/PV.

Mountainous areas under public or quasi-public ownership are assigned the designation of Mountain Reserve (OS/MR). The designation allows the discretionary approval of trails, trailheads and associated facilities, but does not allow vehicular access.

The Open Space designation may also be used to define special resource areas or those that may pose threats or hazards to development. Lands important for their recreational, biological, or regional economic value may also be assigned an open space designation. Examples of resource lands and hazards include ground rupture or liquefaction hazard areas, detention and retention basins, trails, estuaries and large habitat areas for biological resources.

(OS/PP)

Public Parks

(OS/MR)

Mountain Reserve

(OS/PV)

Private Open Space

(OS/FW)

Floodways





# Desert Hot Springs General Plan

Adopted September 5, 2000

## LEGEND

- General Plan Designation Boundaries
- Roads
- Township/Range Sections
- Railroads
- City Limits
- City Sphere of Influence
- Pierson Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan
- R-E Residential Estates (0-1 du/Varies ac)
  - R-E-10
  - R-E-5
  - R-E-2.5
  - R-E/SP
- R-L Residential Low Density (0-5 du/ac)
  - R-L/SP
- R-M Residential Medium Density (0-8 du/ac)
  - R-M/SP
- R-MH Residential Mobile Home (0-10 du/ac)
- R-H Residential High Density (0-14 du/ac)
- R/VS-L Residential Visitor Serving (Low Density)
- R/VS-M Residential Visitor Serving (Medium Density)
- V-S-M
- R/VS-H Residential Visitor Serving (High Density)
- C-N Neighborhood Commercial
- C-C Community Commercial
- C-G General Commercial
- I-L Light Industrial
- I-M Medium Industrial
- I-E Industrial Energy-Related
- P Public Uses (Institutional)
- P/F (Fire Station)
- P/S (School)
- P/PO (Post Office)
- P/U (Utility)
- OS/MR Mountain Reserve
- OS/PP Parks Open Space
- OS/PV Private Open Space
- OS/FW Flood Ways
- T Transportation

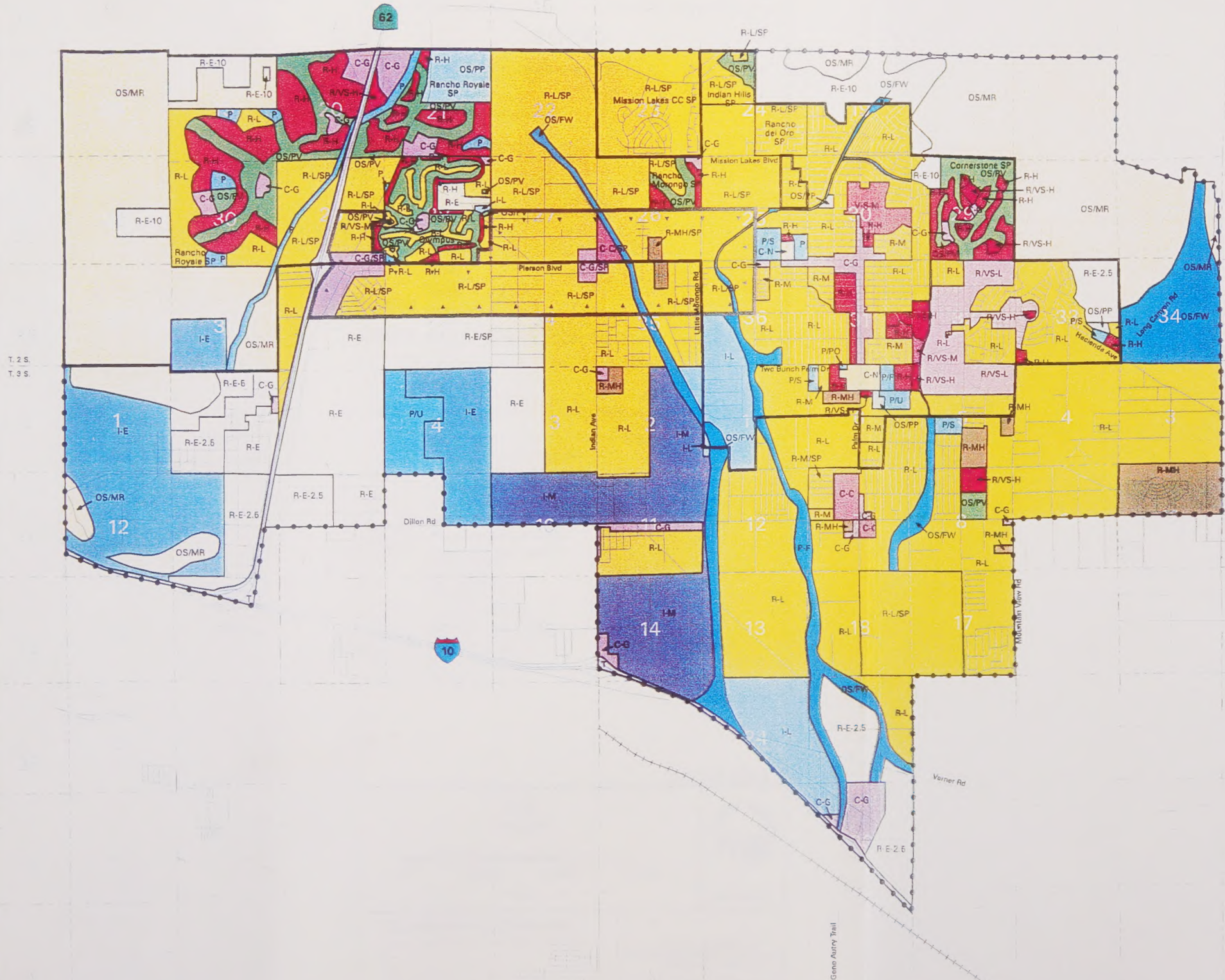
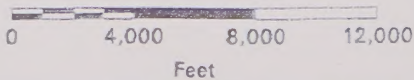


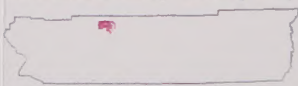
Exhibit III-1

Scale  
1:66,000



NORTH

Riverside County Vicinity Map



TERRA NOVA<sup>®</sup>  
Planning & Research, Inc.

Map Prepared on: October 20, 2000  
Map Prepared by: Aerial Information Systems  
Map Version No.: 3









# Desert Hot Springs General Plan

Adopted September 5, 2000

## LEGEND

- General Plan Designation Boundaries
- Roads
- Township/Range Sections
- Railroads
- City Limits
- City Sphere of Influence
- Plerson Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan

- R-E Residential Estates (0-1 du/Varies ac)  
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R-E-5  
R-E-2.5  
R-E/SP
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- R/VS-H Residential Visitor Serving (High Density)
- C-N Neighborhood Commercial
- C-C Community Commercial
- C-G General Commercial
- I-L Light Industrial
- I-M Medium Industrial
- I-E Industrial Energy-Related
- P Public Uses (Institutional)  
P/F (Fire Station)  
P/S (School)  
P/PO (Post Office)  
P/U (Utility)
- OS/MR Mountain Reserve
- OS/PP Parks Open Space
- OS/PV Private Open Space
- OS/FW Flood Ways
- T Transportation

## Exhibit III-1

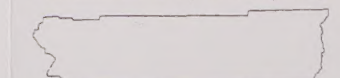
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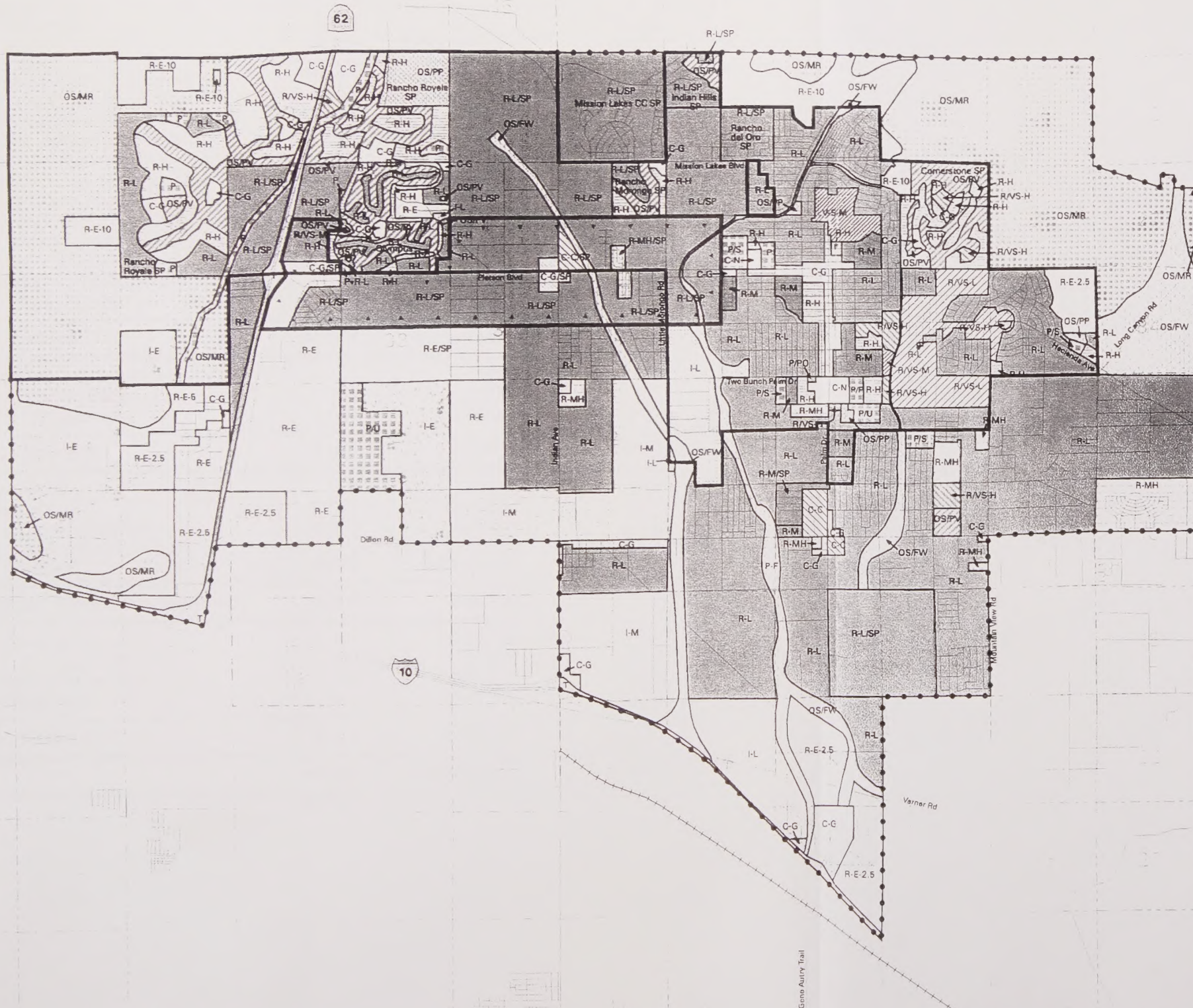
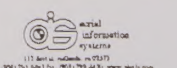
NORTH

Riverside County Vicinity Map



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Planning & Research, Inc.

Map Prepared on: October 20, 2000  
Map Prepared by: Aerial Information Systems  
Map Version No.: 3



R.3.E. R.4.E.

R.4.E. R.5.E.







Table III-2  
City Of Desert Hot Springs & SOI  
Statistical Summary Of Land Uses  
GPAC Preferred Alternative

| Land Use Category                            | Total Acres   | Acres (Dev.d/Vac.)  | % of Total Acres |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|
| R-E Residential Estates (0-1 du/ac)          | 2,053         | 375/1,678           | 5.5%             |
| R-E Residential Estates (0-1 du/2.5 ac)      | 1,345         | 148/1,197           | 3.6%             |
| R-E Residential Estates (0-1 du/5 ac)        | 102           | 0/102               | 0.3%             |
| R-E Residential Estates (0-1 du/10 ac)       | 719           | 3/716               | 1.9%             |
| R-L Low Density Residential (0-5 du/ac)      | 14,779        | 2,908/11,871        | 40.0%            |
| R-VSL Vis. Serv. Low (0-5 du/ac)             | 216           | 57/204              | 0.6%             |
| R-M Medium Density Residential (0-8 du/ac)   | 472           | 213/259             | 1.3%             |
| R-VSM Vis. Serv. Med. (0-8 du/ac)            | 74            | 31/43               | 0.2%             |
| R-H High Density Residential (0-14 du/ac)    | 1,329         | 114/1,215           | 3.6%             |
| R-VSH Vis. Serv. High (0-14 du/ac)           | 82            | 22/60               | 0.2%             |
| R-MH Residential Mobilehome (0-10 du/ac)     | 517           | 275/242             | 1.4%             |
| R-VS Hotel/Motel Rooms (25 rooms/ac)         | 417           | 110/307             | 1.1%             |
| <b>Residential Subtotal</b>                  | <b>22,150</b> | <b>4,256/17,894</b> | <b>59.7%</b>     |
| C-N Neighborhood Commercial                  | 73            | 30/43               | 0.2%             |
| C-C Community Commercial                     | 128           | 14/114              | 0.3%             |
| C-G General Commercial                       | 841           | 180/661             | 2.3%             |
| <b>Commercial Subtotal</b>                   | <b>1,042</b>  | <b>224/818</b>      | <b>2.8%</b>      |
| I-L Light Industrial                         | 900           | 31/869              | 2.4%             |
| I-M Medium Industrial                        | 1,623         | 116/1,507           | 4.4%             |
| I-E Energy-Related Industrial                | 1,875         | 906/969             | 5.1%             |
| <b>Industrial Subtotal</b>                   | <b>4,398</b>  | <b>1,053/3,345</b>  | <b>11.9%</b>     |
| <b>P Public/Quasi-Public (Institutional)</b> | <b>1,009</b>  | <b>581/428</b>      | <b>2.7%</b>      |
| OS/MR Mountain Reserve                       | 5,316         | 67/5,249            | 14.4%            |
| OS/PP Parks Open Space                       | 223           | 22/201              | 0.6%             |
| OS/PV Private Open Space                     | 1,204         | 42/1,162            | 3.3%             |
| OS/FW Floodways                              | 1,617         | 214/1,403           | 4.4%             |
| <b>Open Space Subtotal</b>                   | <b>8,360</b>  | <b>345/8,015</b>    | <b>22.7%</b>     |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>36,959</b> | <b>6,459/30,500</b> | <b>100%</b>      |



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

As the City of Desert Hot Springs continues to grow, its mix of land uses and its needs can be expected to change. While the Land Use Element helps to provide a degree of predictability in how the community will develop, there will be a periodic need to reevaluate the land use plan for the City and make adjustments. State law provides for regular amendments to the General Plan and its elements, including the Land Use Map. As future needs change, the community will have the opportunity to adjust and fine-tune the Land Use Element and map to address changing circumstances, take advantages of emerging opportunities and remedy potential land use conflicts.

Consistent with past planning efforts of the City, the Land Use Element continues to support the logically staged extension of public infrastructure systems and the urban land uses they support. Therefore, in addition to processing larger master planned development, it is considered appropriate to encourage in-fill development in those areas which have undergone substantial development and have under-utilized infrastructure. In-filling along the Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard corridors continues to be a priority. Development planning in the City's Sphere-of-Influence should also be encouraged.

Putting the Land Use Element into effect is accomplished by enforcing the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and other ordinances, codes and regulations. The City's regulatory environment requires that development proposals meet certain criteria in the General Plan and undergo development plan review, which may be subject to public hearings. The following are general policies and programs for land use, followed by discussion of and more detailed policies and programs for each major land use designation.

## **GENERAL LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

A balanced mix of functionally integrated land uses meeting general social and economic needs of the community through simplified, compatible and consistent land use and zoning designations.

### **GOAL 2**

A resort residential community of desirable neighborhoods, a complementary employment base and a variety of community facilities.

#### **Policy 1**

The City shall establish and maintain a master land use map designating the appropriate land uses which implement the goals and policies of the Land Use Element and other elements of the General Plan.

#### **Policy 2**

The City Zoning Ordinance shall directly correspond to the General Plan land use designations and shall include appropriate zoning regulations that implement the Land Use Element.

#### **Program 2 A**

The City shall adopt and maintain a Zoning Ordinance and designations that directly correspond to designations set forth in the Land Use Element, and which guide and regulate development consistent with the General Plan.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** 2000-01; Revise as needed

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall integrate land use analysis and planning as an essential part of development of a master strategic plan for economic development.

#### **Policy 4**

Enhance the character and viability of the City's commercial areas, primarily in the Palm Drive corridor, by integrating nearby higher density residential uses with retail and office commercial development.



#### **Program 4 A**

The City shall incorporate land use and development standards into the Zoning Ordinance that permit and encourage the appropriate integration of residential uses into mix-use commercial land use areas and zoning districts.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** 2000-01

#### **Policy 5**

The City shall assign Specific Plan overlay designations to land located in the City's incorporated limits and Sphere-of-Influence to guide and assure an effective and integrated mix of commercial, office, industrial and residential uses.

#### **Policy 6**

All land use development proposals shall be consistent with all applicable land use policies and standards contained in the General Plan.

#### **Policy 7**

In-fill development shall be encouraged by prioritizing capital improvements in the developed areas of the City.

#### **Program 7 A**

The City's capital improvement program shall assign high priority to projects serving the City's developed and developing areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Annually

#### **Program 7 B**

The City shall make available maps and other information showing the location of all available infrastructure and shall encourage development in those areas where infrastructure is under-utilized.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works and Community Development Departments; City Council.

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Program 7 C**

The City shall utilize Specific Plans to assure the phased, logical and cost-effective extension of infrastructure and buildout in new development.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

### **RESIDENTIAL LAND USES**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Desert Hot Springs has evolved as a primarily resort residential community. In recent years the community has experienced slow growth due to regional economic conditions. In 1999, the City of Desert Hot Springs had approximately 6,563 dwelling units, of which approximately 3,921 were detached and attached single family units, and about 2,309 were multi-family units. The City also had 333 mobilehomes.

The prevalence of single family residential development has helped establish the low to medium density character of the City. This pattern has provided residents with open space and recreation opportunities on their own individual lots. Planned residential developments (PRDs) are a relatively new type of development in the City and preserve low densities by transferring development rights to specific areas and dedicating large areas of a development to community open space and recreation uses. Both types of development are important to assuring high quality residential environment of the City.

#### **Seasonal Community**

Of the City's 6,563 dwelling units built by 1999, approximately 5,478 were occupied by permanent residents, while about 1,085 or 17% serve as second or vacation homes for part-time residents. The City's seasonal population increases during the fall/winter/spring months and decreases during the summer period. The majority of seasonal/second home residences are located in the City's planned residential communities.



### **Projected City Population**

The General Plan provides for a range of residential densities ranging up to fourteen (14) dwelling units per acre within six residential land use designations. Within the City boundaries, the majority of the area is currently (2000) developed as single family residential dwelling units within standard subdivisions. The 1990 permanent population in Desert Hot Springs was 11,668 and had increased to about 15,398 by January 1999.

The City's 1990 average household size was 2.52 in 1990 and had risen to about 2.787 by 1999. As the City's demographics continue to change, the average household size is expected to stabilize and possibly even fall. For a more detailed discussion of the City's household and demographic composition, please see the General Plan Housing Element and Economic Development Element, as well as the General Plan Program EIR. Based upon the Land Use Map, the General Plan has the potential to generate approximately 63,889 new dwelling units. Based upon an average household size of 2.787 persons, the General Plan could add about 178,058 additional people to the City's population. When combined with the City's existing population of 15,398 residents, the City's maximum peak seasonal population could reach approximately 193,456.

### **Affordable Housing**

The City, and all other jurisdictions in the State of California, are required by law to assure the provision and availability of decent housing and a suitable living environment for all economic segments of the community, with special attention to very low, low, and moderate income groups. The elderly are also an identified special group which require special attention when providing for the community's housing needs, as do those paying too much for rent/mortgages and those living in overcrowded conditions. For additional information addressing these and other related issues of the community associated with housing stock, please refer to the Housing Element of the City's General Plan.

## **RESIDENTIAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

Preservation and enhancement of the predominantly low density, resort residential character of the City.

### **GOAL 2**

A variety of all housing types and densities that will accommodate existing and future residents of the community.

#### **Policy 1**

Areas of existing residential development and surrounding vacant lands shall be planned in a manner which preserves neighborhood character and assures a consistent and compatible residential land use pattern.

#### **Program 1 A**

The City shall assign and periodically review residential land use designations to assure that related General Plan goals, including preservation of low density neighborhoods, are met.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** On-going; every five years.

#### **Program 1 B**

Consistently apply the City's discretionary powers and development review process to assure that subdivision and development plans are compatible with existing residential areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Policy 2**

Encourage in-fill development on subdivided lands located adjacent to existing residential areas and utilities to maximize the efficient utilization of land and infrastructure.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall discourage the discontinuous or leap-frog development of residential subdivisions by requiring necessary improvement and/or extension of intervening roadways and infrastructure to serve new development.



#### **Policy 4**

Future development within existing or approved planned unit developments shall not exceed the overall density initially approved for the development.

#### **Policy 5**

Density transfers may occur in planned residential developments in conjunction with the provision of common area amenities and open space. Golf courses, greenbelts, pool areas and other open space uses incorporated into these developments shall be designated as Open Space areas to assure their preservation as such.

#### **Policy 6**

In addition to other policies set forth for open space and hillside designations, additional development parameters to be addressed include slope disturbance, development area and lot coverage, renaturalization and revegetation, and access roads.

#### **Policy 7**

Residential development standards shall incorporate set backs, height, pad elevations and other design and performance standards which assure privacy while preserving scenic viewsheds from adjoining properties.

#### **Policy 9**

Low income/affordable housing shall not be located within one area of the community, but shall be dispersed where feasible, appropriate, and compatible with surrounding land uses.

#### **Program 9 A**

The City shall monitor the amount of low income housing available and make best efforts to meet State requirements for providing such housing types.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department; Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous

### **COMMERCIAL LAND USES**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Desert Hot Springs has seen the slow evolution of its commercial land uses initially from small-scale retail and service providers located along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to

community-scale centers serving a broad market area and typified by the K-Mart center. As the community has continued to grow, neighborhood shopping centers have developed to serve the City's residents. While the City has not attempted to become a commercial powerhouse, certain opportunities such as existing hotels and planned resort development place the City in a position of potentially substantial growth.

While historically commercial development has occurred primarily along the Palm Drive corridor, the City's recent success with the annexation of lands and expansion of the City's Sphere will allow it to tap the markets provided by U.S. Interstate-10 and State Highway 62 traffic. With commercial development growing at the Indian Avenue/I-10 interchange, this area of the City will be an important contributor to the broadened economic base.

The planned provision of neighborhood shopping in the western portion of the City will address the needs of the City's residents as new homes are built and the resident population continues to grow in this area. Future neighborhood centers should be sited to provide convenient access to supermarkets, drugstores and ancillary commercial services. The General Plan provides thoughtfully sited existing and future neighborhood centers located at nodes on arterial roadways, which are expected to satisfactorily meet the neighborhood shopping needs of the community.

Another of the City's important commercial strengths is the spa hotel market. In 2000, the City hosted about 47 hotels, including the Spa Hotel, Mirage Springs and Mineral Springs hotels. The Two Bunch Palms Resort is a world famous, world-class resort that caters to a wide range of client, including the entertainment industry. Planned projects that will make major contributions to resort development include Cornerstone, Rancho Morongo and Rancho Royale. Transient occupancy tax (also termed bed tax) is generated by the City's hotels and is an important component of the City's general fund operating revenues.



The relative importance of the City's various commercial lands is more fully discussed in the Economic Development Element and the General Plan Program EIR.

The General Plan recognizes existing commercial land uses, as well as vacant lands appropriate for commercial development. The Plan provides three (3) commercial land use designations allowing the development of general, neighborhood, and community commercial. The Plan also establishes Specific Plan overlays, which are used to provide control and coordination of commercial development, providing detailed design and analysis of complex projects, indicating the location and intensity of proposed uses.

The thoughtful location, distribution and assigned intensity of commercial development is expected to provide residents with a wider range of choices and services, while greatly enhancing the City's economic base. Commercial designations also recognize the City's comparative advantages in the highly competitive Coachella Valley market, and are consistent with the City's efforts to preserve the predominant low density, resort residential character. The land use plan must position the City as the commercial service district for the greater Desert Hot Springs market area.

## **COMMERCIAL GROWTH POTENTIAL**

The General Plan provides substantial additional lands for future commercial development. These include lands within existing commercial developments and lands where development has yet to occur. Each of the commercial land use categories and their development potential in approximate gross leasable square feet (gla) are set forth in the table below.



**Table III-3  
Commercial Land Use Development Potential**

| Commercial Designation |                         | Total Acres  | Estimated Square Footage <sup>1</sup> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| C-G                    | General Commercial      | 841          | 8,059,471                             |
| C-N                    | Neighborhood Commercial | 73           | 699,574                               |
| C-C                    | Community Commercial    | 128          | 1,226,650                             |
| <b>Total</b>           |                         | <b>1,042</b> | <b>9,985,695</b>                      |

<sup>1</sup> All square footage calculations assume 22% lot coverage.

Of the 1,042 acres of commercially designated lands in the planning area, approximately 818 acres, or more than 78%, are currently (2000) vacant. The General Commercial category comprises the largest block of undeveloped commercial lands (661± acres), with Community Commercial comprising the next largest block of vacant land (114± acres). The General Plan, therefore, provides more than ample commercial lands for future development.

## **COMMERCIAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

A responsive range of commercial land uses conveniently and appropriately distributed throughout the City, meeting the community's needs and taking full advantage of emerging development and economic opportunities.

#### **Policy 1**

Sufficient lands shall be designated to provide a full range of commercial services to the community and surrounding areas for present and future years.

#### **Program 1 A**

Maintain the Land Use map on an on-going basis to assure sufficient lands are designated for commercial uses to support the needs of the community and surrounding areas in a manner consistent with economic opportunities and the resort residential character of the community.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Program 1 B**

Make available market information to developers and realtors, which identifies the City's service needs and potential sites suitable for those commercial goods and services.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Policy 2**

Development standards for commercial land uses shall include setbacks, pad elevations, massing and height limitations, and other requirements, which provide adequate visibility and accessibility, while preserving the scenic viewsheds from adjoining properties and public rights-of-ways.

#### **Policy 3**

Encourage lot consolidation and integrated development planning along the Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard corridors as well as the old Town district to reduce fragmentation and encourage in-fill development.

#### **Program 3 A**

The City shall develop and implement incentive programs for selected lands along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard to encourage a cohesive and coherent development pattern, which reduces fragmented development and promotes infilling.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Council; Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous



## INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

### BACKGROUND

The City's industrial lands are one of the most important and yet least exploited resources in the community. Heretofore, these lands have been limited to an area south of Hacienda Boulevard and east of Little Morongo Road, with the exception of a 160 acre windfarm located in the western extreme of the City. While these lands are well situated and investment by the City Redevelopment Agency has enhanced their accessibility, these lands still subject to flooding and lack essential services such as natural gas and sewage collection.

In addition to industrial lands within the city limits, a substantial portion of the City's Sphere-of-Influence is already under windfarm and light industrial development. The City's wind resource area is generally located west of Indian Avenue and extends from Pierson Boulevard south to Interstate-10. City Sphere lands located along Indian Boulevard, just north of I-10, have already seen substantial industrial development and the potential for expansion in this area is fueled by the availability of services and quick and easy access to I-10.

In addition to the range of industrial uses that have successfully developed in the Coachella Valley over the past few decades, the large scale development of windfarms has presented another opportunity for industrial and service industrial development. As the regional economy continues to grow, it also generates a broader base for industrial and service industrial development and jobs. Nonetheless, the City and the Coachella Valley have seen limited industrial development over the past 15 years.

The Land Use Element provides for industrial land uses which can be best characterized as "light" and "medium", as well as those associated with energy production and transmission. Light industrial development includes industrial and business parks, and other uses conducted entirely within enclosed buildings and with limited and screenable outdoor storage. Industrial uses with the potential to generate excessive noise, dust or smoke, glare, traffic or other significant environmental impact are considered

appropriate for siting on "Medium Industrial" lands. The appropriateness of these and other issues are taken under consideration when reviewing industrial development plans.

Energy-related industrial uses can include a wide range of development types, including wind turbine and solar energy arrays, but may also include gas turbine and biomass conversion technologies with low pollutant emission profiles. Similar types of development may also include energy-related component manufacturing, ranging from wind turbine elements to electrical transmission component manufacturing and assembly. Regionally, alternative energy efforts now include the expanded use of compressed natural gas technologies and technical training programs primarily associated with transportation applications.

Development proposals for industrial uses must include site plans and building elevations, descriptions of machinery, processes, and products, and specifications for the mechanisms and techniques to be used to mitigate impacts from industrial operations. Such proposals must provide a complete characterization of activities, processes and waste/pollutant management technologies to be utilized during the user's operation.

The potential for industrial development in the City will rest primarily on the ability of the City to exploit local and regional industrial service needs, as well as the availability of land, public services and access to highways and other major transportation links. Continued growth in the Desert Hot Springs area will continue to generate its own limited demand for light industrial development. A broad range of industrial development is provided for through appropriate designations and the development of significant sites (10 acres or larger), and should be processed as master planned or specific planned industrial parks. These should be established through development guidelines that assure provisions for roadway and infrastructure improvements.



## **INDUSTRIAL GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Lands that provide for the development of non-polluting, energy-related and other clean industrial development that broadens the economic and employment base of the City, and assures compatible integration with other, non-industrial land uses.

#### **Policy 1**

Provide adequate and appropriate lands designated for industrial uses to provide a broad range of industrial development.

#### **Policy 2**

Industrial lands shall be located in areas that maximize all available and planned infrastructure, including but not limited to water and sewer service, electric and natural gas service, and major transportation corridors, and should minimize the impact on public health and safety.

#### **Policy 3**

To enhance the efficient use of industrial lands, the City shall encourage the preparation of a Specific Plan on larger industrial areas, which master plans the extension of roadways, drainage facilities, utilities and other infrastructure.

#### **Program 3 A**

Prior to or concurrent with the issuance of development permits, the City shall require the develop of Specific Plans on larger assembly of lands designated for industrial development, which shall address circulation, infrastructure, drainage and development standards and guidelines to assure efficient industrial development consistent with the character and quality of the community.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council, Planning Commission, Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Policy 4**

The City of Desert Hot Springs shall seek to attract appropriate industrial users for which the area is particularly suited and encourage those industries to take advantage of the local labor force and markets with which the City has a comparative advantage.

#### **Program 4 A**

In cooperation with property owners, windfarm developers, the Chamber of Commerce, as well as other private interests, the City shall promote development of industrial lands through coordinated joint efforts.

**Responsible Agency:** Private Owners; Community Development Department; Redevelopment Agency; Chamber of Commerce

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Policy 5**

The City shall encourage and support the relocation of inappropriately located industrial or quasi-industrial land uses, which are incompatible with existing and planned land uses.

#### **Program 5 A**

The City shall evaluate existing industrial and quasi-industrial land uses and encourage the formation of industrial parks appropriate for relocating existing inappropriately located industrial uses.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, Redevelopment Agency, Developers

**Schedule:** 3-5 years

#### **Policy 6**

The City shall require adherence to applicable development standards and guidelines to assure aesthetically acceptable industrial developments for all new industrial sites.

#### **Program 6 A**

As an integral part of industrial park planning, the City shall require thoughtful site planning and extensive use of landscaping to enhance the appearance of industrial areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous



### **Program 6 B**

The City shall review all industrial development proposals with a special regard for public health and safety issues to ensure that the type and intensity of the use is appropriate for the proposed location and compatible with surrounding land uses.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

### **BACKGROUND**

The provision of adequate levels of public facilities and services is one of the principal concerns or functions of local government. Land uses for public facilities include such governmental functions as City Hall, fire stations, water wells and storage tanks. Others include schools, hospitals and other medical facilities, utility facilities, and libraries.

The extent and intensity of various land uses determines the level of public services and facilities needed to support them. Residential, commercial, institutional and industrial development each generate specific demand for public services and facilities. The planned, logical extension of urban areas cannot occur without careful planning for the extension of public services and facilities. This includes the maintenance of adequate staffing of City departments responsible for regulating land use and development, assuring adequate and appropriately designed and constructed streets and drainage facilities, and the provision of economic development assistance.

Several service providers are not under the direct regulatory jurisdiction of the City. For instance, the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), rather than the City, are responsible for domestic water and sewer facilities. The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is responsible for assuring the provision of regional flood control facilities. Nonetheless, the City has the essential responsibility to cooperate and coordinate with the appropriate agencies to assure that public services and facilities complement and are compatible with other land uses.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Public facilities which are located to efficiently serve the community and are compatible with surrounding land uses.

### **Policy 1**

The City of Desert Hot Springs shall encourage the development of public facilities in a manner which assures adequate levels of service, while remaining compatible with existing and future land uses.

## **OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

Open spaces in the City of Desert Hot Springs are important areas of environmental, aesthetic and recreational value. These areas constitute a critically important part of the community environment. Open space areas within the City include lands designated for the preservation of natural resources (plant and animal communities), desert washes, mineral deposits, parks and recreational facilities, and areas where the presence or existence of hazardous conditions prohibit development.

As discussed with regard to residential land uses, standard and long-standing subdivisions have provided the context for much of the City's residential development pattern. Recently, however, with the approval of a variety of master planned communities, planned residential developments (PRDs) could become the predominant residential land use in the City for the foreseeable future. These types of developments benefit from the transfer of development rights or permitted densities onto smaller areas, with the remainder dedicated to open space and recreation facilities, including pools, tennis courts, golf courses and passive landscaped open space areas. These areas are required to remain as open space for the life of the development and are not available for further residential or other non-open space uses.

There are four types of open space categories described in the Open Space element, which include open space for public parks (OS-PP),



private golf courses and private open space areas (OS-PV), mountainous reserves (OS-MR) and floodways/washes/channels (OS-FW). Each of these is discussed in more detail under the General Plan Element of Open Space and Conservation. Below are policies and programs for Open Space and Conservation which will assist the City in implementing the Land Use and Open Space elements.

## **OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

Open space areas which protect environmental resources, guard against environmental hazards, provide recreational opportunities and enhanced aesthetic character of the City.

### **GOAL 2**

A land use pattern which preserves the City's resort residential atmosphere, including scenic resources such as hillside and mountain vistas, waterways, and native desert communities.

#### **Policy 1**

Lands suitable and appropriate for preservation as open space areas shall be maintained and enhanced.

#### **Program 1 A**

The City shall review and update land use maps and information on the various types of open space and conservation lands in the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous; every five years.

#### **Program 1 B**

The City shall evaluate all development proposals and identify their impact upon and compatibility with designated open space and conservation lands.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous



# CIRCULATION ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

Continuing development in Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley will result in continued growth in traffic on local streets and regional arterials and highways. In order to protect the City's character as a residential and spa resort community, careful planning of the roadway network is essential. As the City's road system nears its capacity for handling traffic in a safe and efficient manner, the potential for delays and the risk of traffic accidents increases. In order to preserve the City's unique character while providing the safest and most efficient roadway system possible, the Circulation Element documents the current status of the City's road system, identifies problems and proposes solutions. In addition, the Circulation Element analyses future traffic impacts to the City due to inevitable growth in the City and region. The purpose of the Circulation Element is to develop an efficient, cost-effective and comprehensive transportation management strategy consistent with regional plans, local needs to maintain and improve mobility, and in a manner consistent with the goals and character of the community.

## BACKGROUND

Due to its close interrelatedness, the Circulation Element is an outgrowth of City and regional land use planning. The element and roadway system also affects and is affected by a variety of community and environmental factors. The Circulation Element has a direct relationship to the Land Use, Housing, Air Quality, Noise, Public Services and Facilities, and Economic Development Elements. The Community Design, Parks and Recreation, and Flooding and Hydrology Elements are also related to the Circulation Element. The types and intensities of land uses in the City will predictably influence the types and volumes of traffic traveling the City's roads now and in the future.

Specific implementation programs are provided in the Circulation Element which address the existing traffic conditions in the General Plan study area, and are designed to prevent future deterioration of roadway capacity in the community. California Government Code describes conditions and data to be researched, analysed and included within a General Plan Circulation Element. Government Code Section 65302(b) states that the General Plan shall describe the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.

The City is also required to coordinate its Circulation Element provisions with the applicable regional transportation plan, as set forth in Government Code Sections 65103(f) and 65080. In the General Plan study area these regional agencies include the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Sunline Transit Agency. In addition, federal and state transportation planning must be coordinated with local planning pursuant to Section 134, Title 23 of the U.S. Code and California Government Code Section 65080(a), respectively.

Protection of air quality is also associated with growing traffic volumes and infrastructure demand, and requires careful analysis and planning to protect the community from unnecessarily high levels of locally generated pollutants. Vehicular emissions will increase with expanding population, miles traveled and less efficient travel conditions. However, the maintenance of adequate traffic flows, the prevention of traffic congestion caused by inadequate and/or failing roadways, and enhanced vehicle efficiencies will help preserve the air quality in the community.

The Circulation Element has been developed as a comprehensive transportation management strategy based upon an analysis of existing conditions within the City, and future



development as set forth by the General Plan Land Use Map (see Land Use Element). Growth in regional traffic has been based upon statistical trends, an assessment of long-term regional growth potential and the regional transportation model, CVATS, prepared by CVAG.

traffic flow resulting from vehicles coming onto or leaving the roadway. The table below defines the various LOS classifications.

In order to characterize existing traffic volumes and conditions along roadway links, a variety of data were used to quantify levels of use and capacity. Traffic counts were collected by the City, CVAG and CalTrans to gauge existing conditions and provide a sound basis for projecting future traffic volumes. These various data are from the period of 1994 through 1999 and include mid-block roadway segments as well as counts of intersection turning movements.

In order to analyze circulation and the effects of development on the roadway system a traffic distribution process was utilized. This process works directly with existing traffic volumes and existing street geometrics as its starting point. The term "geometrics" pertains to the dimensions and arrangements of the visible features of the roadway. These include pavement widths, lane configuration, barriers, slopes, drainage, interchanges, and other design features, which significantly affect roadway traffic operation, safety, and capacity.

### Levels of Service

The "Level-of-Service" is typically characterized as the available and utilized capacity of a given roadway. Level-of-Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing the efficiency of the flow of traffic. LOS includes a range of alphabetical connotations "A" through "F", used to characterize roadway operating conditions. LOS A represents the best/free flow conditions and LOS F indicates the worst/system failure. Levels of Service are represented as volume to capacity ratios, or vehicle demand divided by roadway capacity. Therefore, as the ratio approaches 1.12+, the roadway approaches LOS F. Added travel and turning lanes increase capacity, as does the inclusion of raised medians and restricted access on a roadway. Raised medians increase roadway capacity by reducing the number of vehicle conflict points and improving traffic flows. Restricted access avoids loss of capacity caused by interruptions and disruptions to



**Table III-4**  
**Level of Service Description**

| Level of Service | Quality of Traffic Flow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Volume/Capacity Ratio |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A                | Low volumes, high speed; speed not restricted by other vehicles.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 0.00 - 0.66           |
| B                | Operating speeds beginning to be affected by other traffic. Some drivers begin to feel restricted within platoons of vehicles.                                                                                                                                                         | 0.67 - 0.77           |
| C                | Operating speeds and maneuverability closely controlled by other traffic; recommended ideal design standard. "Design Capacity". Occasionally drivers may have to wait through more than one red signal. Most drivers feel somewhat restricted, but not objectionably so.               | 0.78 - 0.88           |
| D                | Tolerable operating speeds; often used as design standard in urban areas. Increasing restriction at intersections, but no excessive back ups. Drivers frequently have to wait through more than one red signal. This level is the lower limit of acceptable operation to most drivers. | 0.89 - 1.00           |
| E                | The maximum traffic volume a roadway can accommodate during peak traffic periods. "Maximum Capacity". All drivers wait through more than one red signal.                                                                                                                               | 1.01 - 1.11           |
| F                | System failure; long queues of traffic; unstable flows; stoppages of long duration; traffic volume and speed can drop to zero; traffic volume will actually be less than the volume which occurs at Level of Service E.                                                                | 1.12+                 |

Source: "Highway Capacity Manual," Special Report 209, Transportation Research Board, 1985.

Capacity is generally defined as the number of vehicles that may pass over a section of roadway in a given time period under prevailing conditions. Capacities of roadways are most restricted by intersection design and operation, which is discussed further below. Typically, the p.m. peak hour is the heaviest traffic flow of the day.

The various capacity values assigned for differing roadway sizes and levels of service are described in Table III-4. It should be kept in mind that the roadway capacity estimates in Table III-5 below are "rule-of-thumb" estimates, which are affected by site specific factors such as the number and configuration of intersections, roadway grades, sight distance, the level of truck and bus traffic, and the degree of access control.



**Table III-5  
Daily Roadway Capacity Estimates**

| Facility Type          | Number of Lanes | LOS A <sup>1</sup> | LOS B <sup>1</sup> | LOS C <sup>2</sup> | LOS D <sup>1</sup> | LOS E <sup>1</sup> |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Arterial               | 4               | 10,000             | 17,000             | 24,000             | 31,000             | 38,000             |
| Major                  | 4               | 10,000             | 17,000             | 24,000             | 31,000             | 38,000             |
| Secondary              | 4               | 10,000             | 15,000             | 20,000             | 25,000             | 30,000             |
| Collector <sup>3</sup> | 2               | 6,000              | 9,000              | 12,000             | 15,000             | 18,000             |

<sup>1</sup> Source: Estimates developed by Endo Engineering based upon LOS C and LOS E values provided by the Riverside County Road Department.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Riverside County Road Department, "Information Pamphlet," 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Capacities for two-lane arterials, majors and secondaries will be similar.

### Acceptable Levels-of-Service

Traffic engineers and transportation planners have in recent years attempted to bridge the gap between providing ideal roadway operating conditions and the costs of infrastructure to assure those conditions. While LOS C has long been considered the desirable and optimal level of traffic volume on any given roadway, it represents a standard that is progressively more difficult and less cost-effective to achieve in urban areas. For peak operating periods, LOS D and/or a maximum volume to capacity ratio of 1.00 is now considered the generally acceptable service level. Where a LOS of E or worse exists along certain roadway segments and intersections, every measure to improve operating conditions shall be pursued.

### Average Daily Traffic Volumes

The total number of vehicles that travel a defined segment of roadway over a twenty-four hour period is defined in Average Daily Trips (ADT). The most recent (1996-1999) existing two-way Average Daily Traffic Volumes (ADT) for General Plan designated roadways are graphically presented in Exhibit III-1. Although the ADT is a useful "benchmark" number for determining various roadway configurations and design aspects, the peak hour information, which is the highest volume of traffic to pass over a segment of roadway during an hour period, is also a useful means of determining a roadway's capacity and, indirectly, intersection levels of service. Traffic counts at intersections have provided an even more detailed picture of present and future operating conditions at these intersections.







## Refined CVATS Traffic Model

In order to evaluate existing roadway operating conditions and projected impacts associated with General Plan buildout and regional growth, two separate but interdependent traffic modeling efforts were conducted during the preparation of the General Plan update. The first involved the development of a focused version of the traffic model developed by CVAG called CVATS. CVATS is a large area network model developed for regional transportation planning. It breaks the Valley study area into relatively large zones (see Zone System, below), and uses a generalized land use designation system and trip generation/distribution/assignment procedures.

Utilizing the same procedures but on a more refined level, the General Plan traffic modeling process consists of defining the traffic analysis zones (TAZ) and the roadway network, establishing efficient/logical traffic routes, collecting land use and socio-economic data on each TAZ, calculating trip generation in each TAZ, and distributing traffic and its assignment to individual road segments.

### Zone System

Serving as the basis or foundation for General Plan transportation modeling, the City was subdivided into a system of thirty-four traffic analysis zones (TAZ). Based on the land uses within each TAZ, traffic volumes were generated and then distributed along the circulation system. The TAZ system produces a forecast of traffic volumes in the City, which approximates how actual traffic enters and utilizes the local roadway system. (Please refer to the Circulation Background Study in the Appendix of the Desert Hot Springs General Plan EIR for an illustration of the TAZ's and a complete breakdown of the various land uses within each TAZ).

The TAZ system for Desert Hot Springs was designed utilizing current (2000) land use patterns, including provisions for approved but as yet unbuilt master planned communities. It is tailored specifically to the City of Desert Hot Springs in order to provide the most accurate data possible. The model distributes the projected volume of traffic that will occur due to

the buildout of the General Plan land use plan. From this information, the design requirements to maintain acceptable traffic flows can be determined.

### Trip Generation

Land use data, as designated by existing land uses and the General Plan Land Use Element, were used to establish levels of trip generation within each TAZ of the modeling area. Average trip generation rates per the various land uses were derived from the CVAG CVATS model and were modified for City-specific application. The total number of vehicle trips produced in or attracted to a geographic area is directly related to the land use and demographic variables found in each TAZ. The model estimates the number of peak season vehicle trips that will be produced on an average weekday for each analysis zone.

Four separate "home-based" trip definitions and one "non-home-based" definition are used to develop the model. Home-based trips either originate or are destined for the home. The non-home-based trip type refers to trips that do not originate and are not destined for home (e.g., traveling from work directly to dinner). The actual trip production rates, that is trips per land use type, are taken directly from the CVATS model. The model rates and procedures have been tested against the actual CVATS inputs, indicating close correspondence between the two and validating the trip generation portion of the model.

### Trip Distribution and Traffic Assignment

Once the City has been broken down into the various TAZs and the trip generation for each has been calculated, the next step is to provide a general directional distribution of these trips and then to finally assign them to specific streets. Trips are either attractions or productions, that is they are either drawing trips into the TAZ or are exporting trips. Typically, this distribution of trips is accomplished using a "gravity distribution model", based on the formula that the distribution of trips is proportional to the "attractiveness" of the land use and the distance (or travel time) from the point of trip production. Each type of trip or trip purpose has its own specific travel time distribution function or curve.



Traffic assignment involves assigning to specific route paths the various trip interchanges between TAZs identified in the trip distribution process. The end result forecast of daily traffic volumes yields the aggregate assignment of trips to roadways between and connecting TAZs throughout the City. The traffic assignment process for the General Plan traffic model has also been adapted from procedures used in the CVATS model.

## **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

The City of Desert Hot Springs, unlike other communities in the Coachella valley, is somewhat isolated from other urban development patterns. While intra-community transportation is provided by arterial and collector-sized roadways, Desert Hot Springs is connected to the rest of the Valley and the region by state and interstate highways, including U.S. Interstate-10 and State Route 62. Regional Arterials, including Palm Drive/Gene Autry Trail, Indian Avenue, Dillon Road, Date Palm Drive and Mountain View Road further connect City traffic to other Coachella Valley communities.

The General Plan Circulation Element is the result of extensive baseline data collection, analysis of street design, and the identification of present operating conditions. The existing roadway network is further described in the General Plan EIR and its Traffic Study Appendix.

### **Regional Roadways**

There are two regional routes serving the City, State Highway 62 and U.S. Interstate-10. Highway 62 extends from its juncture with Interstate-10 in the City's southwestern Sphere-of-Influence, northward into San Bernardino County. It connects the upper Coachella Valley with the communities of Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, and Twentynine Palms, as well as Joshua Tree National Park. Interstate-10 connects the Los Angeles region with Arizona and other cities and states to the east, while also serving as the major intra-valley and inter-community connector in the Coachella Valley. These two important roadways provide regional and interstate connections for the City and the Coachella Valley.

### **U.S. Interstate-10**

In the vicinity of Desert Hot Springs, Interstate-10 is built as an eight-lane divided freeway accessed from diamond intersections spaced a minimum of one mile apart. I-10 provides essential inter-city and inter-regional access and is a critical part of the local road network, moving people and goods into and out of the Valley. Direct City access to I-10 is currently provided through the Palm Drive, Indian Avenue and Highway 62 interchanges.

### **State Highway 62**

In Desert Hot Springs, Highway 62 has been built near the location of Worsley Road, which once connected the Coachella Valley and regions to the west with the Morongo Basin. Highway 62 provides important regional access to Joshua Tree National Park and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, as well as the Colorado River and the Mojave desert wilderness and recreation areas. Highway 62 access in the City and its Sphere is currently controlled by stop signs, although signalization and grade separated interchanges may be needed in the future as traffic volumes increase.

In the City and its Sphere, this roadway has already been improved to four-lanes divided by a wide and naturalized median. The completion of ultimate buildout will depend upon a variety of factors and is not expected to occur for many years.

### **Local Major Roadways**

In addition to the two existing regional facilities serving the community, the City has partially developed and maintains an arterial roadway network which serves both local and inter-city traffic. Built essentially along a north-south grid, the City road network has direct interconnections with major arterials and highways providing linkage with adjacent County and incorporated jurisdictions. The location of trip attractors along these roads or the convenience they provide in traversing through the City varies with each road.

### **General Plan Buildout**

As a direct result of the analysis conducted on existing traffic and roadway conditions, as well as projections of future traffic resulting from (current) General Plan buildout, a roadway classification system has been developed and



assigned to existing and future roads. This process has also taken into consideration special issues of concern and opportunities to enhance community circulation. Table III-6 lists these General Plan roadways and also provides the following information:

- A. 1994 Average Daily Trips (ADT)
- B. 1994 Levels-of-Service (LOS)
- C. General Plan Roadway Designation
- D. General Plan Buildout Average Daily Trips (ADT)
- E. General Plan Buildout Levels-of-Service (LOS)



Table III-6  
General Plan Road Analysis

| Roadway Link                   | 1994<br>ADT | 1994<br>LOS | Buildout<br>General Plan<br>Designation | Build-<br>out<br>ADT | Build-<br>out<br>LOS |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>U.S. Interstate-10</b>      |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| W of Palm Drive                | n/a         | n/a         | Freeway                                 | 156,600              | D                    |
| <b>State Highway 62</b>        |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| N of Pierson Boulevard         | 19,000      | A           | Expressway                              | 25,000               | A                    |
| S of Pierson Boulevard         | 15,000      | A           | Expressway                              | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| <b>Mission Lakes Boulevard</b> |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| W of West Drive Dr.            | 2,400       | A           | Major Collector                         | 13,100               | B                    |
| E of Indian Avenue             | 2,200       | A           | Major Collector                         | 15,500               | B                    |
| <b>Pierson Boulevard</b>       |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| E of Highway 62                | 1,100       | A           | Major Arterial                          | 25,600               | B                    |
| W of Indian Avenue             | 2,100       | A           | Major Arterial                          | 46,000               | D                    |
| E of Indian Avenue             | 4,100       | A           | Minor Arterial                          | 28,200               | D                    |
| W of Little Morongo Road       | 4,300       | A           | Minor Arterial                          | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| E of Little Morongo Road       | 5,500       | A           | Minor Arterial                          | 20,200               | C                    |
| W of West Drive                | 6,000       | A           | Minor Arterial                          | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| W of Cactus Drive              | 6,400       | B           | Minor Arterial                          | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| W of Palm Drive                | 7,000       | B           | Minor Arterial                          | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| E of Palm Drive                | 5,200       | A           | Major Collector                         | 24,700               | D                    |
| <b>Hacienda Boulevard</b>      |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| W of Palm Drive                | 3,400       | A           | Major Collector                         | 17,000               | B                    |
| E of Palm Drive                | 6,000       | A           | Minor Collector                         | 8,200                | A                    |
| E of Ocotillo Road             | 6,700       | B           | Minor Collector                         | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| E of Mesquite Avenue           | 6,700       | B           | Minor Collector                         | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| W of Miracle Hill Road         | 5,800       | A           | Minor Collector                         | 18,400               | C                    |
| W of Mountain View Road        | 6,500       | B           | Minor Collector                         | 16,700               | C                    |
| E of Mountain View Road        | 4,900       | A           | Minor Collector                         | 27,800               | E                    |
| W of City Limits               | 1,900       | A           | Minor Collector                         | 19,500               | C                    |



**Table III-6  
General Plan Road Analysis**

| Roadway Link                 | 1994<br>ADT | 1994<br>LOS | Buildout<br>General Plan<br>Designation | Build-<br>out<br>ADT | Build-<br>out<br>LOS |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Two Bunch Palms Trail</b> |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| E of Palm Drive              | 6,100       | B           | Major Collector                         | 6,800                | A                    |
| W of Palm Drive              | 6,700       | B           | Minor Arterial                          | 11,900               | B                    |
| <b>Indian Avenue</b>         |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| N of Mission Lakes Blvd.     | 6,000       | A           | Minor Arterial                          | 10,600               | B                    |
| N of Pierson Blvd.           | 7,000       | B           | Minor Arterial                          | 12,000               | B                    |
| S of Pierson Blvd.           | 8,300       | B           | Major Arterial                          | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| <b>Little Morongo Road</b>   |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| N of Pierson Blvd.           | 2,100       | A           | Major Collector                         | 16,700               | B                    |
| S of Pierson Blvd.           | 1,900       | A           | Major Collector                         | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| S of Two Bunch Palms Tr.     | 3,000       | A           | Major Arterial                          | 39,800               | D                    |
| <b>West Drive</b>            |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| N of Pierson Blvd.           | 3,700       | A           | Minor Collector                         | 1,200                | A                    |
| S of Pierson Blvd.           | 3,400       | A           | Minor Collector                         | 7,500                | A                    |
| <b>Palm Drive</b>            |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| N of Eighth Street           | 6,300       | A           | Major Collector                         | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| N of Pierson Blvd.           | 10,500      | B           | Major Collector                         | 20,200               | C                    |
| S of Pierson Blvd.           | 14,600      | B           | Major Collector                         | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| N of Hacienda Avenue         | 18,800      | C           | Major Collector                         | 32,100               | C                    |
| S of Hacienda Avenue         | 18,800      | C           | Major Collector                         | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| S of Two Bunch Palms Trail   | 20,600      | C           | Major Arterial                          | 50,500               | E                    |
| N of south City Limits       | 23,400      | F           | Major Arterial                          | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| <b>Miracle Hill Road</b>     |             |             |                                         |                      |                      |
| N of Hacienda Avenue         | 1,000       | A           | Secondary                               | n/a                  | n/a                  |
| S of Hacienda Avenue         | 400         | A           | Secondary                               | 4,600                | A                    |



**Table III-6  
General Plan Road Analysis**

| <b>Roadway Link</b>       | <b>1994<br/>ADT</b> | <b>1994<br/>LOS</b> | <b>Buildout<br/>General Plan<br/>Designation</b> | <b>Build-<br/>out<br/>ADT</b> | <b>Build-<br/>out<br/>LOS</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Mountain View Road</b> |                     |                     |                                                  |                               |                               |
| N of Hacienda Avenue      | 1,400               | A                   | Minor Collector                                  | 13,800                        | B                             |
| S of Hacienda Avenue      | 4,400               | A                   | Minor Collector                                  | 9,700                         | A                             |

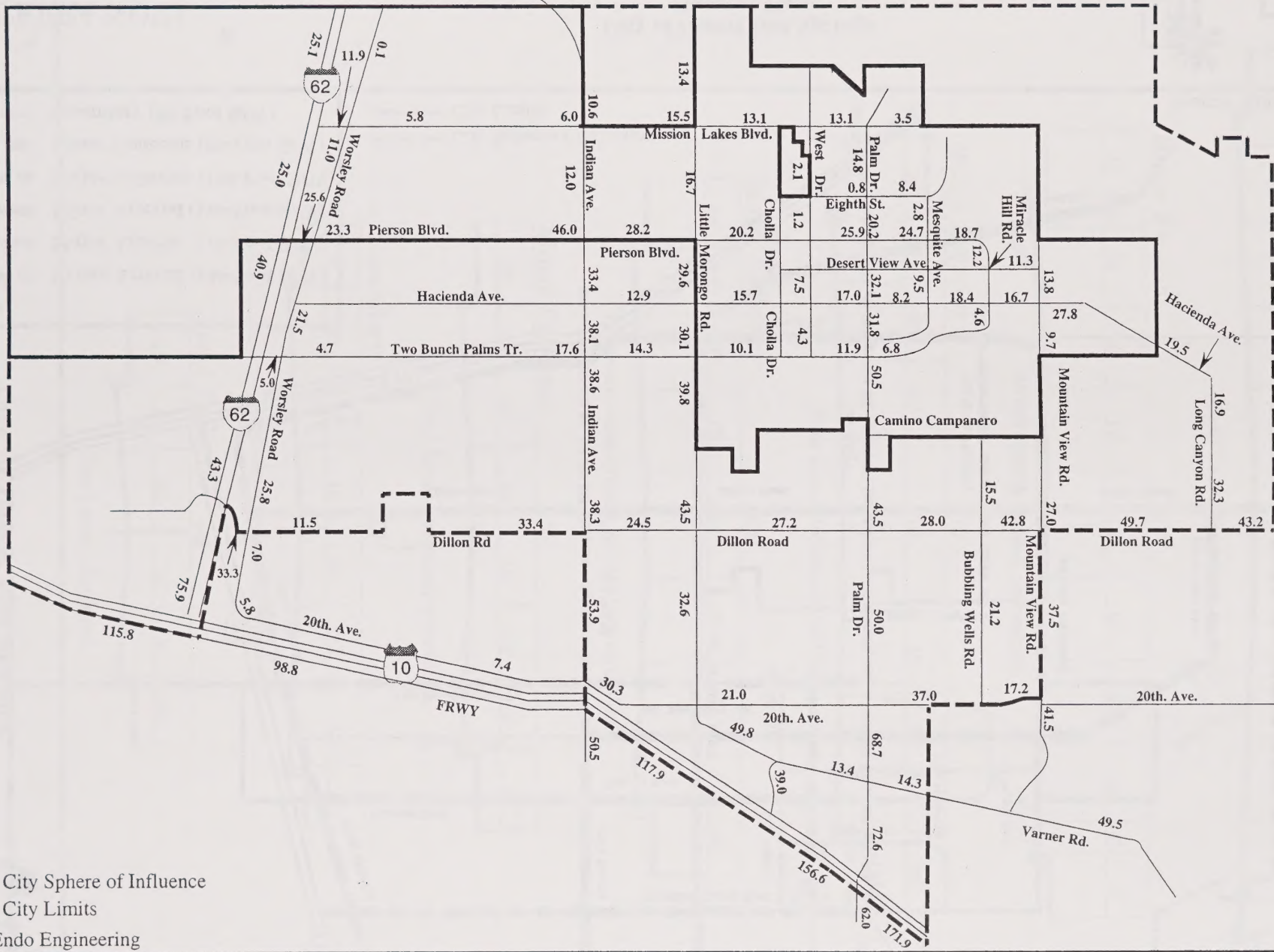
n/a = data not available

Source: "Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update Circulation Background Study," Endo Engineering, March 2000.

## **GENERAL PLAN ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS**

Based upon existing and projected traffic demands generated by buildout of the General Plan, each major roadway has been assigned a specific design classification. The need for and appropriateness of each classification has been based upon projected future traffic volumes and overall community design goals set forth in the General Plan. Each of the classifications correspond with the street cross sections illustrated in Exhibit III-5. Certain refinements may be required when securing right-of-way and constructing improvements at specific locations.





--- City Sphere of Influence  
 --- City Limits  
 Source: Endo Engineering



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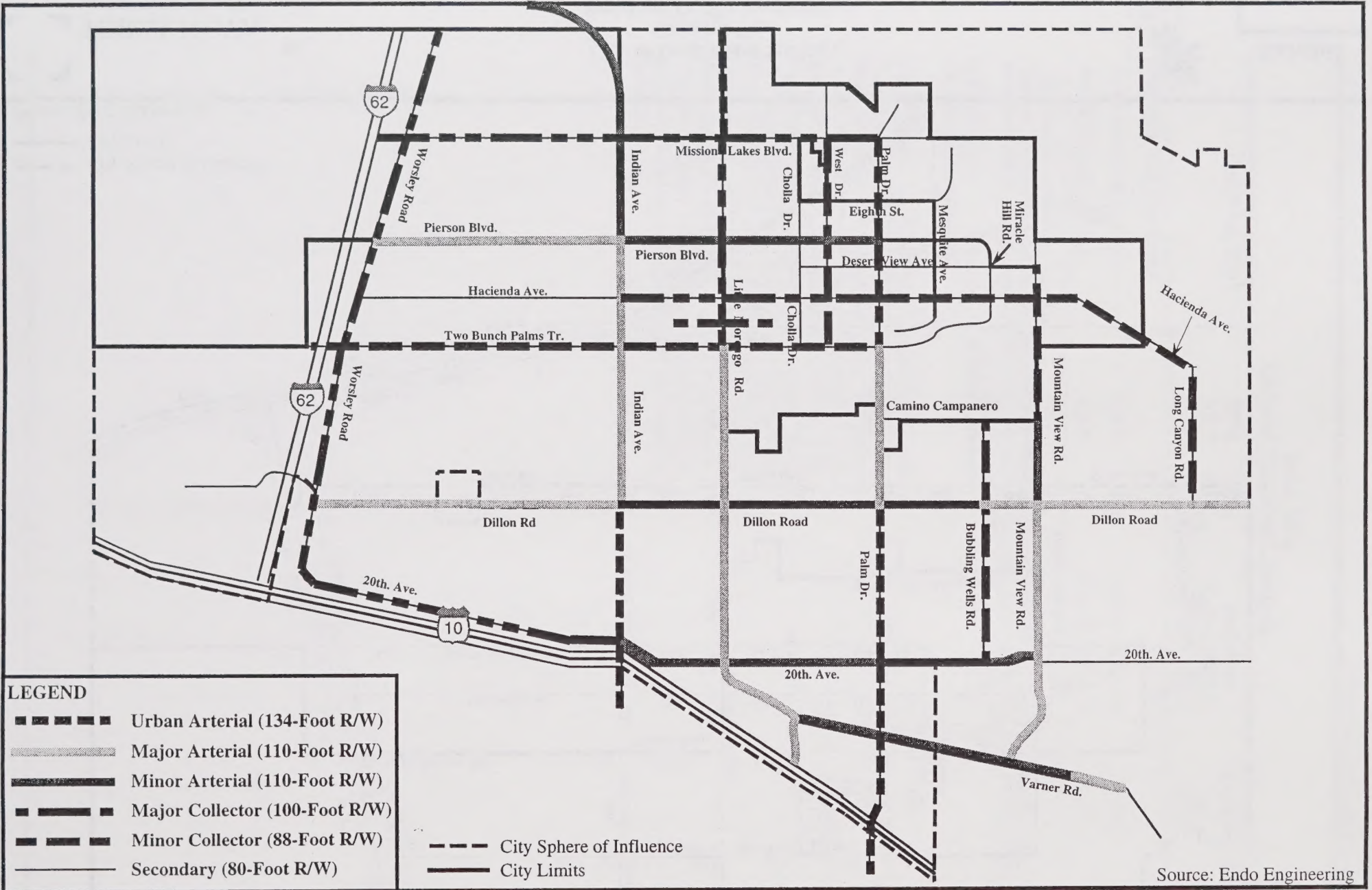
**City of Desert Hot Springs  
 General Plan  
 Buildout Traffic Projections**



**Exhibit**

**III-3**







### Urban Arterial

134'

|    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |
|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| 8' | 4' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 14' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 4' | 8' |
|    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |

(Eight Lanes divided, no parking)

### Major Arterial

110'

|    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |
|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| 8' | 4' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 14' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 4' | 8' |
|    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |    |

(Six Lanes divided, no parking)

### Minor Arterial

110'

|     |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |
|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 12' | 8' | 12' | 12' | 22' | 12' | 12' | 8' | 12' |
|     |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |

(Four Lanes divided, no parking)

### Major Collector

100'

|     |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |
|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 10' | 8' | 12' | 12' | 16' | 12' | 12' | 8' | 10' |
|     |    |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |

(Four Lanes divided, no bike lane/no parking)

### Minor Collector

88'

|     |    |     |     |     |     |    |     |
|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 12' | 8' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 8' | 12' |
|     |    |     |     |     |     |    |     |

(Four Lanes undivided, w/parking)

### Secondary

88'

|    |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |
|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 8' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 12' | 8' |
|    |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |

(Four Lanes undivided, w/parking)

### Local Collector

60'

|     |    |     |     |    |     |
|-----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|
| 10' | 8' | 12' | 12' | 8' | 10' |
|     |    |     |     |    |     |

(Two Lanes w/parking)



## **SPECIAL ISSUES OF CONCERN**

There are additional areas of concern, above and beyond those of increased traffic volumes and infrastructure needs associated with future traffic, that are also appropriately evaluated in the General Plan. These include inadequate planned roadway improvements in adjoining jurisdictions, securing of additional right-of-way for future improvements, provisions for pedestrians and bicycles, and other issues. Each of these areas is briefly discussed below.

### **Preservation of Capacity**

Roads are generally the most expensive public facilities in terms of initial and on-going maintenance costs. Roads also make a substantial demand on limited land and can have adverse, as well as beneficial, impacts on adjoining property. Therefore, roadway design and operation must be as cost-effective as possible. Along major arterial roadways, such as Palm Drive, Mission Springs and Pierson Boulevards, access from adjoining property should be controlled and limited. In more densely developed areas, limited access and median islands will also improve roadway operation for vehicles and pedestrians.

Specifically, the City should also consider closing certain side streets intersecting with Palm Drive through the use of cul-de-sacs. The first area of focus may be from Twelfth Street south to Hacienda Avenue, where numerous opportunities exist to reduce traffic in nearby residential neighborhoods, and improve the flow of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in this core area of the City.

### **All-Weather Access**

Mission Creek, Little and Big Morongo Washes and other channels and washes draining local mountains require the construction of all-weather crossings to assure accessibility during major flooding. Currently, only Mission Creek at Pierson Boulevard has a bridge providing all-weather crossings for these roadways, and even this wash does not benefit from channel improvements which would assure the effectiveness of the crossing in a major storm event. Highway 62 crossings of the numerous washes, including Mission Creek, provide low-flow facilities but do not address

flooding associated with major storm events. As traffic volumes increase at these locations and elsewhere in the City, it may be necessary to construct all-weather bridges at these crossings as well.

### **Pedestrian Issues**

Pedestrian and other non-motor circulation is encouraged in the City wherever possible. The provision of sidewalks, bike lanes and off-street trails are especially important along major roadways in the community. While sidewalks have been constructed in many parts of the City, their design and construction has been inconsistent, disjointed and unconnected. The City shall review, prioritize and plan to construct missing segments of the sidewalk system, which must continue to correct deficiencies such as compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). In future development, pedestrian safety and accommodation should be given emphasis equal to that currently given to automobile access. Off-street trails are addressed in greater detail in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan.

### **Securing Right of Way**

The City has generally been able to secure right-of-way needed to provide full-width mid-block roadway improvements, and has also been able to secure additional right-of-way along major arterials designated as scenic corridors. The need for expanded intersection improvements throughout the City requires that additional right-of-way be secured to provide for additional through lanes and turning lanes. The greatest demand for additional right-of-way will be at future critical intersections, where dual left turn lanes and dedicated right turn lanes will be needed.

### **Roadway Aesthetics and Community Design**

The City's roads and streets make a substantial and highly visible community statement, which can reflect disregard and degradation or appreciation and enhancement. As entries to the community, the design and appearance of Palm Drive, Pierson Boulevard, Dillon Road and others will either detract from or enhance the traveling public's perception of the City. Quality roadway design and landscaping help



shape the first impressions the community generates. The dedication of lands and costs of improvements and their maintenance need not be excessive; quality design need not cost more, and should be expected.

### **Parking and Access Facilities**

While many of the newer commercial developments in the City have been able to provide adequate parking to serve their customers, some older developments are frequently unable to provide sufficient off-street parking. This problem is particularly evident along Palm Drive and is associated with older and smaller retail outlets. The needs for service and maintenance personnel must also be addressed. It is essential that new development, as well as projects undergoing redevelopment, provide adequate on-site parking to meet the parking demand generated. Parking lot ingress and egress should also be more thoughtfully controlled, and consolidation encouraged, to minimize disruption of traffic flow, facilitate the preservation of capacity, and assure public safety. The redevelopment of Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard provides important opportunities for driveway consolidation.

### **Public Transportation**

The Sunline Transit Agency is the provider of public transit service within the City of Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley. The Sunline fleet consists of new buses powered by compressed natural gas. Buses are also equipped with wheelchair lifts and bike racks. One route currently services the City: Sunbus Route 14 provides service along Palm Drive, Hacienda Avenue, Mission Lakes Boulevard, West Drive and Pierson Boulevard. Sunline also provides the "Sun Dial" service, consisting of a fleet of small buses providing curb-to-curb service from home to destination. The service is wheelchair accessible. Services must be requested at least 72 hours in advance.

### **Transportation Demand Management**

As the Valley and the community continue to grow, transportation demand and systems management is necessary to preserve and increase available roadway "capacity." Transportation Demand Management (TDM) involves the development and implementation of policies, plans and programs designed to

encourage the use of a wider range of transportation alternatives, including public transit and bicycles. In addition to an emphasis on alternative travel modes such as carpooling, van pooling and mass transit, TDM can also include employee flextime as an important component that reduces peak hour travel and associated traffic congestion. In response to state mandates, the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) prepared a regional Congestion Management Program, which required Desert Hot Springs and other cities to prepare TDM ordinances or risk the loss of federal transportation funds. The City adopted its TDM ordinance in 1992.

### **Railway Facilities**

Rail freight service is provided to the Coachella Valley by the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR), with freight transfer facilities located in Indio and Coachella. There is also current Amtrak service to Palm Springs and Indio on Southern Pacific's line. These facilities carry between 30 and 40 trains per day, almost all of which are freight. The rail lines are what SPRR calls Centralized Track Control (CTC) facilities, which include extensive electronic switching and communication facilities. While there is neither direct City passenger or freight access to these facilities, the Palm Springs platform allows passenger boarding, and rail sidings in Indio and Coachella currently facilitate freight access.

### **Aircraft Traffic**

The primary air transportation link for Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley is the Palm Springs International Airport. The airport is classified in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) as a long-haul commercial service airport. It is capable of supporting non-stop commercial service to destinations over 1,500 miles and is classified as a small hub air passenger airport based upon the percentage of national airline enplanements it supports. Since 1972, the airport has increased service from 143,809 passenger enplanements to 486,644 in 1994, with an average annual growth of about 5.5 percent. Major destination cities include San Francisco, Chicago, Seattle and New York. Commercial traffic is clearly seasonal, with the peak season being the January-February-March period and the slowest period occurring during the summer



months. Commercial operations are expected to continue to grow, with passenger enplanements projected to reach approximately 809,256 by the year 2015.

### **Major Utility Corridors**

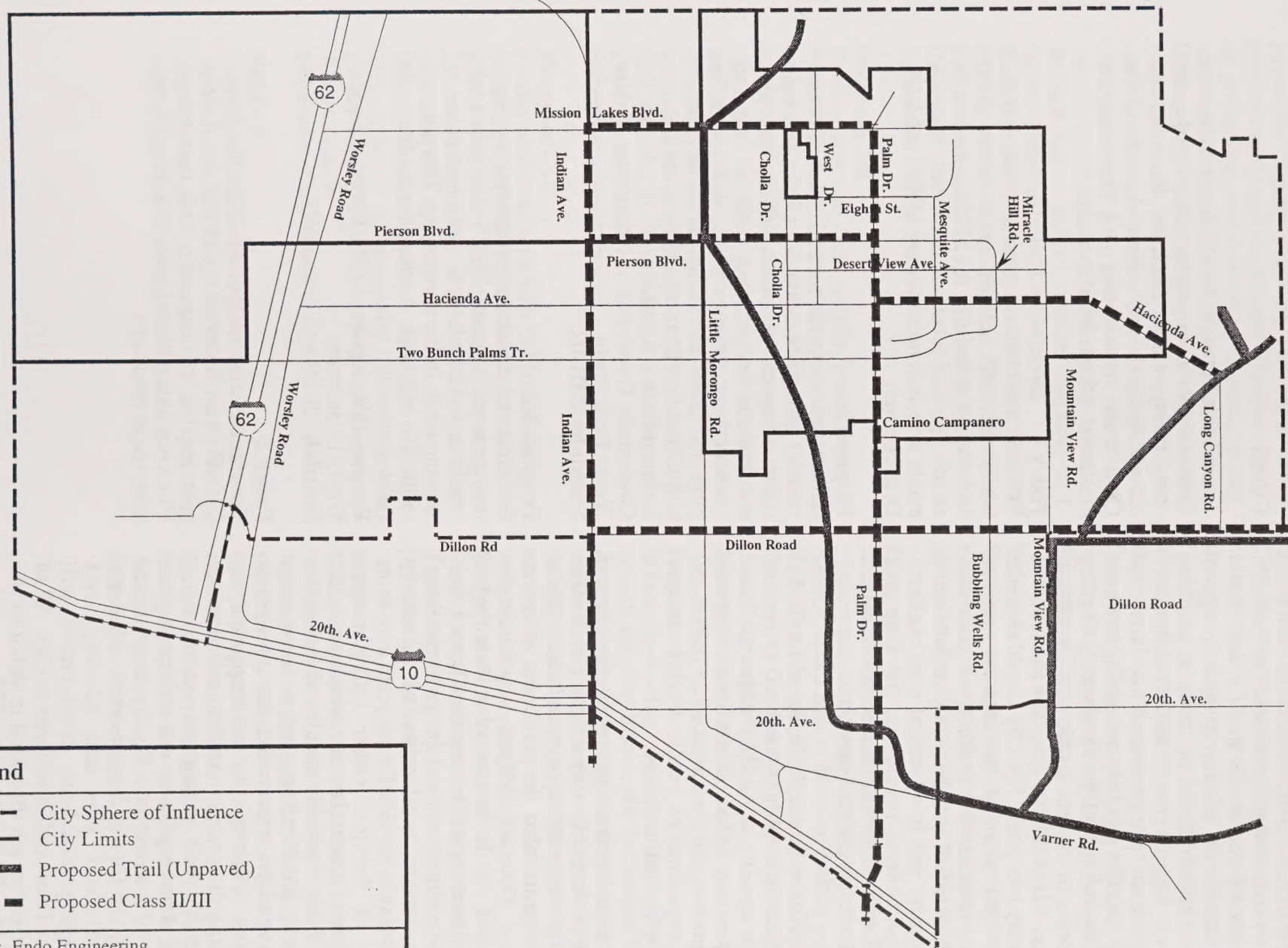
Assuring the planned provision of major corridors and easements for the transport of natural gas, electricity, communications, domestic water and sewerage, and storm drainage is also an important role of the General Plan. In many instances, the need for utility corridors is met through the provision of easements in or adjacent to City streets and along common lot lines. The planning of future land use, the division of land and the processing of development applications requires communication and coordination with utility companies and other service providers, to assure the availability and provision of easements and rights-of-way for the extension of roads and utility lines and services (Also see Public Utilities Element).

### **Bicycle Facilities**

Currently, the City has only a partially integrated system of sidewalks, bicycle lanes or multi-use trails within public rights-of-way. Carefully thought out and planned alternative transportation corridors (sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-purpose trails) will enhance and give greater opportunity to use various alternative modes of transportation. Future bike routes will serve as a safe route for intra-City bicycle traffic. These routes should be clearly marked and striped and should be designed as one-way bike routes to flow in the same direction as the adjacent automobile traffic. Combination sidewalk/bikeways require an eight foot width. The multi-use trails will also serve as links to recreational facilities throughout the community (See the Parks and Recreation Element for details on design standards of the bike lanes and trails network).

The Coachella Valley Non-Motorized Transportation Element, prepared by CVAG in 1995, addresses the allocation and extent of existing and proposed bicycle, pedestrian, equestrian and other trail facilities in the Coachella Valley. The location of these facilities in the Desert Hot Springs area are illustrated in Exhibit III-6.





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City of Desert Hot Springs  
General Plan  
CVAG Non-Motorized Transportation



Exhibit

III-6



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Land use trends and their associated changes in traffic volumes and patterns should periodically be reviewed and monitored, and periodic adjustments in planning and program implementation should be made by utilizing roadway improvement and maintenance management programs. This will be accomplished by regularly monitoring traffic on major roadways and by conducting ongoing inventories of current traffic and circulation patterns; this should be done at a minimum of once every two years. The City should continue to coordinate with State and regional agencies that have jurisdiction over the state highways in the community. Through the implementation of this Element and involvement with regional, state and federal regulators, the City will progressively alleviate current problems and avoid future system inadequacies.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques are widely used to extend or preserve capacity of existing roadways. These techniques may include efforts to encourage car or van pooling and the continued utilization and future expansion of public transit services provided by Sunline Transit.

Special intersection design that allows dedicated right turn overlap signal phasing to provide free right turns where appropriate, and other system enhancements also provide cost effective solutions. Detailed analysis is periodically undertaken for the intersections identified in City engineering studies and the General Plan to refine realignments and design engineering, and to assure availability of necessary right-of-way to provide for adequate long-term Levels of Service. Other transportation management techniques that address specific issues of concern within the City of Desert Hot Springs include limiting, and in some cases restricting access onto arterials and other major roadways. This can be accomplished by combining driveways, installing raised center medians to restrict turning movements, adding travel and turning lanes, and minimizing the number of intersections. Finally, a concerted effort by the City to move towards a balance between local jobs and housing, and encouraging mixed-use development will minimize future traffic volumes in City. All of these measures are discussed in detail in the General Plan Traffic Study and EIR.

## **CIRCULATION ELEMENT GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

A circulation network that efficiently, safely and economically moves people, vehicles, and goods using transportation facilities that meet the current demands and projected needs of the City, while maintaining and protecting its residential and spa resort character.

### **Policy 1**

Establish and maintain a master plan of roads, which sets forth detailed improvement plans and priority schedules for implementation, to assure minimal levels of mid-block roadway and intersection operations at LOS C and LOS D, respectively.

### **Program 1 A**

Initiate and complete a master plan of roads, which includes targets for ultimate rights-of-way and pavement width and provides a schedule for securing right-of-way and constructing improvements consistent with the projected needs and standards set forth in the City Circulation Element and Program EIR.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department, Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02.

### **Program 1 B**

Establish and maintain a roadways pavement management program (PMP) that sets forth timelines and schedules for the maintenance of existing roads in the community. The program shall also establish funding levels for each fiscal year.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2001; update annually.

### **Policy 2**

Coordinate and cooperate with CalTrans, CVAG and Riverside County to assure preservation of capacity and maximized efficiency along Palm Drive, Highway 62 and other major roadways.



#### **Program 2 A**

Maintain a liaison with CalTrans, CVAG and Riverside County planning and engineering staffs to study and implement effective means of preserving and improving capacity along Interstate-10 and its interchanges, Palm Drive, Highways 62 and other major roadways serving inter-city traffic. Strategies shall include but are not limited to synchronized signalization, consolidation of access drives and restriction of access, construction of additional travel and turning lanes, raised median islands, and improvements to critical intersections.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department; CVAG; Riverside County; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 2 B**

Review new and redeveloping projects along Palm Drive and Pierson Boulevard with the intent of limiting access and aligning and/or consolidating access drives in a manner which minimizes conflicting turning movements and maximizes the use of existing and planned signalized intersections.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 2 C**

Confer and coordinate with CalTrans in efforts to secure state and federal funding sources for preservation and expansion of capacity on Interstate-10, State Highway 62 and other important City arterials.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department; CalTrans; Federal Highway Administration

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

Participate and represent the City's interests in circulation-related regional planning activities, and encourage acceptance of City policies regarding regional transportation issues.

#### **Program 3 A**

Establish and maintain a liaison with CVAG, SCAG and CalTrans and pro-actively represent City in transportation planning meetings to assure that City policies, programs and strategies are given priority consideration in resolving regional transportation issues affecting the community.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CVAG; SCAG; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 4**

Encourage expansion of the service area and the ridership of the public transit systems operated by the Sunline Transit Agency within the City.

#### **Program 4 A**

Consult and coordinate with the Sunline Transit Agency and assure vocal representation on the Agency Board and its decision making process.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department; Sunline Transit Agency; CVAG

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 4 B**

When reviewing development proposals, consult and coordinate with the Sunline Transit Agency and solicit comments and suggestions on how bus stops and other public transit facilities and design concepts, including enhanced handicapped access, should be integrated into project designs.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department; Sunline Transit Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 4 C**

When reviewing development proposals, consult and coordinate with the Sunline Transit Agency to encourage the development of rideshare and other alternative, high occupancy transit programs for employers with sufficient numbers of employees.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department; Sunline Transit Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous.



### **Policy 5**

As a means of reducing traffic associated with work-related out-migration, make every reasonable effort to enhance the City's jobs/housing balance.

#### **Program 5 A**

In order to locate jobs and housing near each other to produce shorter work commutes, make a concerted effort to increase City-based employment; encourage mixed-use development with a residential component contiguous with or near to employment and/or commercial centers; facilitate use of the City's home occupation ordinance; and encourage major employers to evaluate tele-commuting opportunities, either home-based or at local centers, as well as part-time options for employees.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Redevelopment Agency; Chamber of Commerce

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

Promote the use of multi-occupant modes of transportation, and the shifting of employment-related trips out of current peak traffic periods.

#### **Program 6 A**

To the extent practical, prepare a rideshare plan for City employees to serve as an example for area employers. This plan should include meaningful incentives for employees to walk, bike, or rideshare to complete their work commutes.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Program 6 B**

To the extent practical, the City and the Sunline Transit Agency shall encourage employers to provide 4 day-40 hour and 9 day-80 hour work weeks, and/or provide start/end times outside of the 6-8 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. peak periods of traffic.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Sunline Transit Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 6 C**

Encourage and pro-actively support the efforts of the Sunline Transit Agency in organizing a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) among employers to provide an on-going information network, develop a rideshare plan, and determine opportunities for transit/shuttle operations.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Sunline Transit Agency

**Schedule:** Continuous

### **Policy 7**

Develop and encourage the use of continuous and convenient bicycle routes and multi-use trails to places of employment, shopping centers, schools, and other high activity areas with potential for increased bicycle use.

#### **Program 7 A**

Prepare and adopt a master plan of bicycle-ways, and multi-use trails, and develop or require the development of secure bicycle storage facilities and other support facilities which increase bicycle use (Also see Parks and Recreation Element).

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous.

### **Policy 8**

Coordinate with the Riverside County Flood Control District and its consultants to assure the provision of all-weather crossings along critical roadways.

#### **Program 8 A**

Consult and coordinate with the Riverside County Flood Control District, and cooperate in the planning and development of all-weather crossings as part of the community's Master Drainage Plan and its implementation.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Riverside County Flood Control District

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous.

### **Policy 9**

Facilitate the design and installation of a community locational/directional signage program to efficiently direct traffic to high use public buildings, parks, and other facilities.



**Program 9 A**

Provide clear public signage directing traffic to the City's park and recreational facilities, and all public facilities, including but not limited to, libraries, hospitals, police and fire stations, and civic centers.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous.

**Policy 10**

Coordinate and cooperate with the Palm Springs Regional Airport Authority to assure that the airport continues to meet the City's transportation, commercial and emergency response needs.

**Policy 11**

Streets within planned residential areas shall be installed and maintained as private streets, and shall be developed in accordance with development standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable standards and guidelines

**Policy 12**

City truck routes shall be designated and limited to Palm Drive, Two Bunch Palms Trail, Indian Avenue, Little Morongo Road, Pierson Boulevard and Highway 62.



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# HOUSING ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the City of Desert Hot Springs Housing Element is to provide both the citizens and public officials with a comprehensive understanding of the housing needs within the City, and to set forth policies and programs that will enable the City to reach its defined housing goals. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that every Desert Hot Springs resident secures a safe and decent place to live within a satisfactory environment, the Housing Element promotes a closer coordination of housing policies and programs at local, state and federal levels since the attainment of housing goals depends upon the shared commitment of all levels of government.

## BACKGROUND

The Housing Element functions as an integral part of a comprehensive growth plan. As it manages development, the City must balance the need to assure adequate housing for all current and future members of the community against the need to provide and support existing and anticipated levels of public services and facilities. The Housing Element, therefore, directly relates to the amount and location of commercial and industrial development, the type and intensity of land uses, and the amount of housing development established through land use designations in the Land Use Element. In addition, the Housing Element relates to the availability of adequate roadways, pedestrian facilities and transit routes established in the Circulation, Transportation and Scenic Highways Element, and the protection of sensitive receptors established in the Hazards Element.

The Housing Element includes a description of existing housing types, condition of existing units, overcrowding, overpayment, homelessness, and the demand for affordable housing in the City. The Element also includes an analysis of the progress made since the drafting of the last Housing Element, and projections of needs for the next five years.

## California Law

California Government Code requires that every City and County prepare a Housing Element as part of its General Plan. In addition, State law contains specific requirements for the preparation and content of Housing Elements. According to Article 10.6, Section 65580, the Legislature has found that:

- (1) The availability of housing is of vital statewide importance, and the early attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for every California family is a priority of the highest order.
- (2) The early attainment of this goal requires the cooperative participation of government and the private sector in an effort to expand housing opportunities and accommodate the housing needs of Californians of all economic levels.
- (3) The provision of housing affordable to low and moderate income households requires the cooperation of all levels of government.
- (4) Local and state governments have a responsibility to use the powers vested in them to facilitate the improvement and development of housing to make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.
- (5) The legislature recognizes that in carrying out this responsibility, each local government also has the responsibility to consider economic, environmental, and fiscal factors and community goals set forth in the General Plan and to cooperate with other local governments, and the state, in addressing regional housing needs.

Section 65581 of the Government Code states that the intent of the Legislature in enacting these requirements is:

- (1) To assure that local governments recognize their responsibilities in contributing to the attainment of the State housing goal.
- (2) To assure that cities and counties prepare and implement housing elements which, along with federal and State programs, will move toward attainment of the State housing goal.
- (3) To recognize that each locality is best capable of determining what efforts are required by it to contribute to the attainment of the State



housing goal as well as regional housing needs. (4) To ensure that each local government cooperates with other local governments to address regional housing needs.

Government Code Section 65583 outlines the required content of all housing elements including identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs, and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Specific requirements include the following:

(1) An assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. The analysis should include population and employment trends; documentation of household characteristics; inventory of land suitable for residential development; governmental and other constraints to new housing development; analysis of any special housing needs and an assessment of existing affordable housing developments.

(2) A program which sets forth a five-year schedule of actions the local government is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the objectives of the housing element in order to meet the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

## **Evaluation of Existing Housing Element Goals and Policies**

The last Housing Element Update was adopted by the City Council in 1993, and certified by the courts at a later date. The Update contained a number of goals, policies and programs, which have been implemented since that time. This section of the Housing Element reviews these goals, policies and programs, and evaluates their effectiveness. Since all programs under each policy are directly related, their discussion is handled as one block of information after the listing of the programs.

### **Goal 1**

*Ensure that a variety of housing types including larger multifamily units, are constructed and rehabilitated throughout the City in all price ranges.*

### **Policy 1A**

*The City shall facilitate the construction of renter and owner occupied housing by providing a range of land use and zoning categories throughout the City.*

*Program 1A.1: Specific Plans shall incorporate a variety of housing types, and shall provide for senior and affordable housing within the project.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous, as Specific Plans are submitted*

Only one Specific Plan was adopted since the adoption of the Update. The project, known as the Rancho Royale Specific Plan, is required to provide 10% of all its 9,000 units for affordable housing. One Specific Plan Amendment, recently adopted by the City Council, provides that all units in a 422 unit development be restricted to seniors only. The City will continue to implement this program as Specific Plans are processed in the future.

*Program 1A.2: The City shall encourage infill development wherever possible, to lower the costs of extending infrastructure.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

Infill development in the City continues, although limited development activity has occurred since 1993. The following Table lists the building permit activity for 1994 through 1999 for new home construction. In 1994 and 1995, the construction of a new tract occurred in the City. Since that time, all single family residences have been constructed on existing lots within the City.



**Table III-7  
New Residential Building Permits  
1994-1999**

| Year | Permits |
|------|---------|
| 1994 | 115     |
| 1995 | 53      |
| 1996 | 23      |
| 1997 | 7       |
| 1998 | 2       |
| 1999 | 9       |

Source: Desert Hot Springs Building Department.

### **Policy 1B**

*The City shall encourage the preservation of its existing housing stock.*

*Program 1B.1: The Redevelopment Agency shall continue to participate in grant and loan assistance programs for homeowners in Redevelopment Areas 1 and 2, in order to encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing units.*

*Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency, Planning*

*Schedule: To be determined each fiscal year, based on budgetary constraints and opportunities.*

The City has had a very active Home Improvement Program, which has focussed on a number of activities. First, a sewer connection program was established, to allow low and very low income households to connect to the City's sewer system and abandon septic tanks. There has been a continuing concern for the public health and safety due to failing septic systems in the older neighborhoods of the City. The sewer connection program was operated as a grant program. Utilizing CDBG funds, the City completed 15 sewer connections in fiscal 1999-2000, all of which were very low or low income households. In previous years, the City has assisted an average of 10 families per year in connecting to sanitary sewer.

In addition, the City established and funded a Home Repair Program, which allowed low and very low income households to apply for grants to repair roofs, pave driveways, replace or install HVAC systems, and perform repairs to plumbing and electrical systems in their homes. This program, active prior to 1998, granted an average of 6 projects annually for very low and low income households.

Although Redevelopment Agency funds are significantly limited at this time, the City will maintain this program for use in the future.

*Program 1B.2: The City shall ensure that development which will displace residents through destruction of housing units shall be required to assist in the relocation of these residents, through the use of Conditions of Approval or other binding means.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

There has been no displacement of low income households due to demolition of units in the previous planning period. The City will continue this program, to ensure that it is available should it be needed in the future.

### **Policy 1C**

*The City shall encourage the development of larger unit sizes in multifamily rental projects and second units on single family lots in order to alleviate overcrowding.*

*Program 1C.1: The City shall encourage multi-family rental and owner-occupied projects which construct three and four bedroom units a substantial portion of the overall development.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

There has been no multi-family construction during the planning period. The City will maintain this program for use in the future.



*Program 1C.2: The City shall encourage development of second units on single family lots by providing information packets at City Hall on second unit construction and the conditions set forth in Government Code Section 65852.1, which allows second unit development.*

*Responsible Department: Planning  
Schedule: Continuous*

The City has developed a brochure which is available from the Building Department, relating to the standards and regulations for second units on single family lots.

## **Goal 2**

*The development of affordable housing projects for very low, low and moderate income households to meet the community's need.*

### **Policy 2.A**

*The City shall provide a variety of programs to encourage the development of very low, low and moderate income housing.*

*Program 2A.1: For developments which will restrict their units to very low, low or moderate income households, the City shall allow a density bonus of 25% over the underlying zoning designation.*

*Responsible Department: Planning  
Schedule: Continuous*

No new multi-family apartment construction occurred during the planning period. The City has granted density bonuses for both the Waldorf and Linda Vista Residences projects, which provide 94 housing units for very low and low income seniors. Linda Vista also provides some of its units for handicapped residents over the age of 18.

*Program 2A.2: The City Redevelopment Agency shall expeditiously calculate and allocate Housing set-aside funds to affordable housing programs on an annual basis.*

*Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency  
Schedule: Annual*

The City projects its set aside funds with the preparation of each budget, and assigns the actual funds immediately upon receipt of the data from the County of Riverside.

*Program 2A.3: A Mortgage Assistance Program for qualifying households shall be established and funded with Housing set-aside funds.*

*Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency  
Schedule: Fiscal 1993-94*

The City established a Mortgage Assistance Program, and assisted an average of 4 households annually in securing their first home. This program is still active, but has been unfunded in this fiscal year.

*Program 2A.4: The City shall establish and maintain a regular contact with the Riverside County Housing Authority to ensure that housing assistance programs within the City are actively pursued.*

*Responsible Department: Planning  
Schedule: 1993*

The City maintains regular contact with the County Economic Development Agency, under which the Housing Authority operates.

*Program 2A.5: The City shall actively assist qualified developers in preparation of applications for State and Federal housing grants and loans as they become available and in finding appropriate land suitable for this type of development.*

*Responsible Department: Planning, Redevelopment Agency, City Manager's Office  
Schedule: Continuous*

The City assisted with both the Linda Vista Residence project and the Waldorf projects, in processing applications and assisting with the State review process. No further requests for such projects have been received.

*Program 2A.7: The City shall prepare handout materials for developers and low income households which detail the programs*



*available to both parties for assistance in the development and rehabilitation of low income housing.*

*Responsible Department: Planning, City*

*Manager's Office*

*Schedule: Fiscal 1993-94*

A handout is maintained in the Planning Department which provides the development community with information on programs available at the City. Given the limited building activity through the previous planning period, that handout was not often utilized. Current and future requests for documentation will continue to be addressed in an expeditious manner. Copies of the rehabilitation program guidelines are also available at City Hall for residents wishing to apply.

*Program 2A.7: The City shall work with Angel View Hospital and other private organizations in assisting whenever possible in the mainstreaming of residents into the community.*

*Responsible Department: City Manager's Office*

*Schedule: Continuous*

Since adoption of the last Update, the City worked with Angel View in streamlining permitting for 7 homes, which each house 6 residents, which were constructed in the City. These residents are all handicapped, and would have to reside in a hospital or assisted living facility if the homes were not available.

*Program 2A.8: The City of Desert Hot Springs will continue to support and assist in enforcing, as required, the provisions of the Federal Fair Housing Act. All complaints regarding discrimination in housing will be referred to the Riverside County Housing authority. The City will promote fair housing by providing brochures and posting information at City Hall.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

The City utilizes fair housing materials and renters' rights materials supplied by the County

for distribution to concerned parties. In addition, all reception personnel are instructed in how to refer telephone inquiries regarding such matters. Since the City has only limited staff resources (2 receptionists and one planner) with familiarity with housing issues, the City will continue to refer such cases to the County Housing Authority in this planning period.

*Program 2A.9: The City of Desert Hot Springs shall consider engaging in a Cooperation Agreement with the Riverside County Housing Authority, in order to participate in the Hope III Program to provide additional affordable housing on land owned by the Housing Authority in the City.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: 1993*

The City has continually maintained a contact with County representatives regarding the Housing Authority project in the City. However, the County has indicated no interest in expanding the project on the project site.

*Program 2A.10: The City of Desert Hot Springs shall consider the use of Community Development Block Grant funds to assist in the subsidy of handicapped households.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: 1993*

The City received less than \$100,000 in CDBG funds annually during the previous planning period. These funds were primarily used toward street maintenance and improvement projects, and to the low income Sewer Hook-Up program. The funds were not allocated to handicapped households, because of the limited resources.

### **Goal 3**

*Provide additional affordable senior housing projects, and protect existing senior housing projects from conversion to other uses.*

#### **Policy 3.A**

*The City shall facilitate the development and preservation of senior housing through incentives and assistance programs.*

*Program 3A.1: The Redevelopment Agency shall re-establish a program of grants and*



*loans to senior residents in Redevelopment Areas 1 and 2 to encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing units.*

*Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency*

*Schedule: Fiscal 1993-94*

The City established a rehabilitation grant program for low and very low income households, and is also working with the County in qualifying seniors for the home repair program available through the Economic Development Agency. When combined with CDBG funds, a number of senior households are being assisted to provide sewer connection at no charge to the homeowners.

*Program 3A.2: The City will provide assistance to developers of senior housing through Housing set-aside funds whenever possible.*

*Responsible Department: Redevelopment Agency*

*Schedule: Continuous*

The Agency has not directly funded any projects in the previous planning period. Requests for fee waivers, and participation in establishing meals on wheels and other senior programs at the Waldorf and Linda Vista Residences was undertaken during this time.

*Program 3A.3: The City will ensure the preservation of existing mobile home units, particularly since they are often senior-oriented housing, by requiring developers to relocate displaced residents if a park is to be converted to another use. Existing mobile home parks in the proposed annexation areas will not be required to upgrade to current City of Desert Hot Springs zoning standards. New units within existing parks shall continue to be subject to original development standards.*

*Responsible Department: Planning, Building and Safety*

*Schedule: Continuous*

No mobile home residents had to be relocated, since no mobile home parks were converted during the previous planning period. The Annexation 22 area was incorporated into City limits, but no parks occurred within it. Annexation 21 lands, which were never incorporated into the City, had included a number of mobile home parks. No other effort to annex additional land has occurred in the previous planning period.

*Program 3A.4: For developments which will restrict their units to senior households, the City shall allow a density bonus of 25% over the underlying zoning designation.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

Both the Waldorf and Linda Vista Residences utilized the density bonus provision in the rehabilitation of their units, which are restricted to low and very low income seniors.

*Program 3A.6: The City shall work with private organizations such as Desert Hot Springs Apartments, Inc. in obtaining financing for project expansion.*

*Responsible Department: City Manager's Office, Redevelopment Agency*

*Schedule: 1993-94*

No apartment projects were expanded during the previous planning period.

#### **Goal 4**

*The City shall preserve its character and home town atmosphere.*

#### **Policy 4.A**

*The City shall encourage the preservation of the home town atmosphere through design standards, pedestrian and public transit access.*



*Program 4A.1: The City shall require Specific Plan projects to develop design guidelines which provide for buffers between land uses, small scale development, and appropriate architecture.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

The City adopted its Downtown Design Plan, which allows innovated residential uses within its urban core, including apartments over businesses. The design standards also provide architectural themes and standards for development in this area.

*Program 4A.2: Residential projects shall be required to provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including trails, sidewalks, benches and open space areas wherever appropriate.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

All residential projects must provide sidewalks on City streets at the time the project is constructed. Specific Plan projects also incorporate trails, bicycle facilities and benches whenever appropriate.

#### ***Policy 4.B***

*High density, affordable and senior projects shall be located with convenient access to shopping and public transit.*

*Program 4B.1: The City shall require developers of affordable and senior housing projects to confer with the SunLine Transit Agency regarding the provision of service to the project area wherever feasible.*

*Responsible Department: Planning*

*Schedule: Continuous*

All applications are routed to SunLine Transit for comment prior to issuance of any planning permit. In addition, the Waldorf and Linda Vista Residences have worked with transportation providers to ensure that their residents have access to commercial and medical facilities.



## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In order to understand the housing needs of Desert Hot Springs, it is important to first look at the make up of the community and its demographics.

## REGIONAL SETTING

This section of the Housing Element contains relevant demographic, household, and socio-economic data. This information is primarily based on data provided in the 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, the California Department of Finance and the City of Desert Hot Springs.

Desert Hot Springs is located in the upper Coachella Valley, a subregion of Riverside County. The County experienced extremely rapid growth in the 1980's. County population grew from 663,923 in 1980 to 1,110,000 in 1990, an increase of 67%. The California Department of Finance further estimates that population in the County rose to 1,473,307 in 1999. This rapid rate of growth brings opportunities as well as the challenges of managing urbanization.

## Historic and Current City Population

The U. S. Census estimated a population of 5,941 in Desert Hot Springs in 1980, which grew to 11,668 in 1990, an increase of 96.4%. The population as of January 1, 1999 was estimated by the California Department of Finance to be 15,398 persons. This represents an average annual growth rate of just under 4%.

## Population by Age Group and Ethnicity

The median age in Desert Hot Springs as of 1990 was 30.0 years. Table III-8 presents the number of persons in various age ranges and the percent of total population for each group.

**Table III-8**  
**Age Distribution**

| Age          | Number        | % of Total  |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Under 18     | 3,390         | 29%         |
| 18-24        | 1,187         | 10%         |
| 25-44        | 3,660         | 32%         |
| 45-64        | 1,759         | 15%         |
| 65+          | 1,672         | 14%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11,668</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

## Ethnic Characteristics

Table III-9 displays the ethnic distribution for Desert Hot Springs in 1990.

**Table III-9**  
**Ethnic Characteristics, 1990**

|                 | Number        | % of Total  |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| White           | 8,513         | 72.9%       |
| Hispanic        | 2,278         | 19.5%       |
| Black           | 454           | 3.8%        |
| Native American | 159           | 1.3%        |
| Asian           | 226           | 1.9%        |
| Other           | 38            | 0.6%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>11,668</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Although the community remains predominantly caucasian, the data shows an increase in minority population. This is representative of the trend throughout Southern California.



## Household Size and Income

The City had a total of 4,594 households in 1990. In 1999, the Department of Finance estimated 5,478 households, an 19.2% increase in ten years.

The 1990 Census identified a median household income in the City of \$20,687, considerably lower than the County median income, which stood at \$36,000 for the same time period. The following Table demonstrates that 73% of the City's households in 1990 had an income below the County median household income.

**Table III-10**  
**Household Income Distribution, 1990**

| Income        | No. of HH    | % of Total  |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| \$ 0-4,999    | 311          | 7%          |
| 5,000-9,999   | 762          | 17%         |
| 10,000-14,999 | 628          | 14%         |
| 15,000-24,999 | 896          | 19%         |
| 25,000-34,999 | 743          | 16%         |
| 35,000-49,999 | 698          | 15%         |
| 50,000-74,999 | 369          | 8%          |
| 75,000-99,999 | 126          | 3%          |
| 100,000 +     | 61           | 1%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>4,594</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

**Table III-11**

## Major Employers - 1998

| Employers                                 | Number of Employees |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Palm Springs Unified School District      | 1,400               |
| Angel View Crippled Childrens' Foundation | 240                 |
| Miracle Springs Hotel                     | 95                  |
| Desert Hot Springs Spa Hotel              | 80                  |
| K-Mart                                    | 80                  |
| Stater Brothers Market                    | 75                  |
| Von's Market                              | 75                  |
| Mission Springs Water Dist.               | 33                  |
| Carl's Junior Restaurant                  | 33                  |
| McDonald's Restaurant                     | 32                  |
| Agua Caliente Spa Hotel                   | 47                  |

Source: Riverside County Economic Profile for Desert Hot Springs, 1998

## Major Employers

Table III-11 lists the largest employers located in the City of Desert Hot Springs, while Table III-12 demonstrates the industries in which the City's residents have been employed.



**Table III-12**  
**Employment by Industry, 1995**

| Industry                    | No. Of Employees | % of Total |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Agriculture                 | 181              | 3.1%       |
| Mining                      | 7                | 0.1%       |
| Construction                | 691              | 11.9%      |
| Manufacturing, Durables     | 184              | 3.2%       |
| Manufacturing, Non-Durables | 166              | 2.8%       |
| Transportation              | 252              | 4.3%       |
| Communications              | 160              | 2.7%       |
| Wholesale Trade             | 198              | 3.4%       |
| Retail Trade                | 1,166            | 20.0%      |
| Finance/R.E./Insurance      | 368              | 6.3%       |
| Business/Repair Service     | 408              | 7.0%       |
| Personal Services           | 520              | 8.9%       |
| Entertainment /Recreation   | 136              | 2.3%       |
| Health Services             | 565              | 9.7%       |
| Educational Services        | 252              | 4.3%       |
| Other Services              | 433              | 7.4%       |
| Public Administration       | 141              | 2.4%       |

Source: Urban Decision Systems, Inc.

The retail and service sectors have, and continue to be a major source of employment for residents of the City.

### Housing Characteristics

Housing needs in Desert Hot Springs are a function of affordability, not supply.

The 1990 Census showed a total of 5,494 housing units in the City.

**Table III-13**  
**Housing Characteristics-1990**

| Units in Structure             | Number       |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Single Family                  | 3,108        |
| 2-4 Units, Multi-family        | 952          |
| 5-9 Units, Multi-family        | 595          |
| 10 or more Units, Multi-family | 514          |
| Mobilehome, Trailer, Other     | 325          |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>5,494</b> |

Source: 1990 Census

The State Department of Finance updated this distribution as of January 1, 1997.

**Table III-14**  
**Housing Characteristics-1997**

| Units in Structure      | Number       |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Single Family           | 3,902        |
| 2-4 Units, Multi-family | 1,082        |
| 5+ Units, Multi-family  | 1,224        |
| Mobilehomes             | 331          |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>6,539</b> |

Source: State Department of Finance

Clearly, the greatest growth in housing type has occurred in the single family home area, continuing the City's historic trend as a suburban community.

### Age of Housing Stock

75.8% of the City's housing was built less than 30 years ago, while 24.2% of the housing pre-dates 1970, as demonstrated in the Table below.



**Table III-15**  
**Age of Housing Units**

| Year Built   | No. of Units | % of Total  |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1991-99      | 815          | 12.9%       |
| 1989-90      | 169          | 2.6%        |
| 1985-1988    | 1,440        | 22.9%       |
| 1980-1984    | 839          | 13.3%       |
| 1970-1979    | 1,518        | 24.1%       |
| 1960-1969    | 829          | 13.2%       |
| 1950-1959    | 366          | 5.8%        |
| 1940-1949    | 180          | 2.8%        |
| Before 1940  | 153          | 2.4%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>6,309</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, City of Desert Hot Springs

### Condition of Housing Stock

Prior to the preparation of the last Housing Element Update in 1993, a City-wide housing survey was conducted. Conditions in Desert Hot Springs having changed little since that time, the same housing survey can be expected to be representative of current conditions in the City.

Housing was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with the following definitions applied to each numerical category:

1. **Very good condition**, no maintenance necessary.
2. **Good condition**, minor aesthetic maintenance necessary.
3. **Acceptable condition**, aesthetic and structural maintenance necessary.
4. **Poor condition**, major aesthetic and considerable structural maintenance necessary.
5. **Unacceptable condition**, considerable dilapidation; health and safety a concern.

Of the 4,157 units surveyed, 1,492, or 35.9% were in very good condition; 1,409 or 33.9% were in good condition; 878 or 21.1% were in acceptable condition; 325, or 7.8% were in poor condition; and 53, or 1.3% were in unacceptable condition. Overall, therefore, the vast majority (91%) of the City's housing stock is in

acceptable or better condition. However, 9% of housing is poor or worse condition.

### Vacancy Status

The 1990 Census showed an overall vacancy rate of 17%. Correcting for seasonal or recreational units, which are considered vacant by the Census but are not available or used for permanent occupancy, the vacancy rate decreases to 5.5%.

**Table III-16**  
**Vacancy Status - 1990**

| Unit Type                                | No. Of Units Vacant | % of All Units |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| For Rent                                 | 259                 | 4.7%           |
| For Sale                                 | 75                  | 1.4%           |
| Rented or Sold, not occupied             | 55                  | 1.0%           |
| Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use | 311                 | 5.7%           |
| Other Vacant                             | 208                 | 3.8%           |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>908</b>          | <b>16.6%</b>   |

Source: 1990 Census

The Department of Finance estimates that the City has a total of 6,563 housing units in 1999, 5,478 of which are occupied, representing a 8.3% vacancy rate. If adjusted for seasonal homes, which represent approximately 5.7% of vacancies in 1990, the vacancy rate in the City is 2.6%.

### Housing Tenure

Housing tenure for occupied units only in 1990 is shown in Table III-17.



**Table III-17  
Housing Tenure - 1990**

| Unit            | No. Of Units | %           |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Owner Occupied  | 2,048        | 44.7%       |
| Renter Occupied | 2,538        | 55.3%       |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>4,586</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: 1990 Census

## Overcrowding

The State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has set the standard of 1.01 persons per room as the criteria for defining "overcrowded" housing conditions. Overcrowding is one of the specifically identified issues that must be addressed in the Housing Element. High rents and home prices in some communities limit low income persons from obtaining homes with adequate space or bedrooms. The following Table represents the range of persons per room.

**Table III-18  
Overcrowding, 1990**

| Persons/Room          | No. of HH Owner-Occupied Units |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1.01 to 1.50          | 68                             |
| 1.51 to 2.00          | 27                             |
| 2.01 or more          | 12                             |
| Renter-Occupied Units |                                |
| 1.01 to 1.50          | 219                            |
| 1.51 to 2.00          | 216                            |
| 2.01 or more          | 82                             |

Source: 1990 Census

Based on this data, a total of 624 households in Desert Hot Springs were overcrowded. This represents approximately 13% of all housing units in the City in 1990. Of the total households overcrowded, 221 were occupied by very low income households, 200 of which were renters and 21 of which were owners. Further, 96 households were low income households, 50 of which were renters, and 46 of which were owners.

## Housing Values

The 1990 Census estimated values for owner-occupied single family homes in the City. These are listed in Table III-19.

**Table III-19  
Values, Specified Owner-Occupied  
Housing Units, 1990**

| Value                | Number |
|----------------------|--------|
| \$14,999 or less     | 11     |
| \$15,000 to 34,999   | 43     |
| \$35,000 to 59,999   | 349    |
| \$60,000 to 99,999   | 1,017  |
| \$100,000 to 149,999 | 202    |
| \$150,000 to 199,999 | 46     |
| \$200,000 or more    | 26     |

Source: 1990 Census

The Table clearly shows that in 1990, 83.8% of the City's single family residences were valued under \$100,000. The median housing value in 1990 was \$74,800.00. At the time, this made the City the sixth most affordable in terms of home values in the six county SCAG region. Desert Hot Springs has, and is currently an affordable community in which to own a home.

## LAND INVENTORY

Table III-20 shows the available residentially designated land in the City which is located within one mile or less of all necessary services and infrastructure (including water, electric power, telephone and City roadways), as well as the total potential units which can be generated on these lands. The data, originally generated in 1992, has been updated using building activity reports to reflect 387 new residential dwelling units built since that time, all of which have been single family homes. At an average of 9,000 square feet per lot, this represents a maximum of 77 acres of low density land which has been developed.



**Table III-20  
Vacant Residential Land, 1999**

| <b>Designation</b>              | <b>Acreage</b> | <b>Potential<br/>Units</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Low Density<br>(SP,5 d.u./acre) | 1,743          | 8,715                      |
| Low Density<br>(5 d.u./acre)    | 929            | 4,645                      |
| Medium Density<br>(8 d.u./acre) | 192            | 1,536                      |
| High Density<br>(14 d.u./acre)  | 65             | 910                        |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>2,929</b>   | <b>15,806</b>              |

Source: Coachella Valley Association of Governments, Land Use Information System, 1992.  
Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc. 1999 update.

The City has designated two Redevelopment Project Areas, which together comprise the majority of the City. Several sites are suitable for development as residential use. The majority of the project areas are already residential.

In addition to the vacant acreage quantified in Table III-20 a number of infill parcels are scattered throughout developed areas of the City. No data is available on the number of these parcels, but they provide an additional land resource for future housing development. Utilities and services are readily available to these parcels.

Multi-family residential units are permitted by right in the Medium Density and High Density land use designations. A conditional use permit is required under the commercial land use designations for multi-family residential development.

The City's fair share of housing for the 1998-2005 period is 233. Sufficient vacant acreage is available to provide this number of units. There is also sufficient range of allowable densities in the vacant acreage to permit the development of housing in a variety of types (single family, multi-family) and costs.

Water and sanitary sewer services are provided by the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD), an independent taxing district whose service area is wider than the incorporated City limits. MSWD maintains planning documents, including master water and sewer plans, which are updated regularly. Water service is available within the City to all lands listed above. Sanitary sewer service is not required unless available at the site. In the case of the lands listed above, sanitary sewer is available at the site. MSWD has sufficient capacity, or plans for capacity increases in the future, to accommodate growth as it occurs.



## EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS

It is the responsibility of the City of Desert Hot Springs to assure the provision of a broad mix of housing types, including and especially for the socio-economically disadvantaged.

In order to implement affordable housing goals and policies established in this Element, the following housing programs are available.

### City Programs

The City's set-aside funds are utilized to fund a number of housing assistance programs. The set-aside funds collected by the Agency are only enough to pay debt service on previous bond issues, due primarily to a 25% drop in property values in the last 5 years. However, the Agency has programmed, through its AB 1290 Redevelopment Implementation Plan, \$160,000 annually toward housing implementation programs during this planning period. The City currently offers these programs through its Redevelopment Agency:

**First Time Home Buyer's Program:** Offers households earning less than 80% of the County median income a grant of up to \$5,000 to pay for down payments and closing costs on a first home.

**Multi-Family Rental Improvement Program:** For apartment projects which house only households earning less than 80% of the County median, this program will grant up to \$3,000 per unit, to a maximum of \$25,000, for repairs and improvements.

**Code Compliance Checks:** At the request of a property owner or prospective buyer, City staff will provide copies of all building and related permits for the property so that the owner can determine whether previous rehabilitation work has been inspected and found in compliance with codes.

### County and Federal Programs

There are numerous programs available to provide rental assistance and to encourage the construction of new affordable housing. The following programs are available in the City of Desert Hot Springs:

**Section 8 Housing Assistance:** The Riverside County Housing Authority provides HUD Section 8 rental assistance to lower income renters within the City. The Authority subsidizes 115 units at this time, although the total number of vouchers and certificates fluctuates regularly.

**Fair Housing Programs:** The City has an agreement with the County of Riverside to provide a wide range of services for City residents. These services are designed to implement fair housing policies and procedures and to provide information concerning minority rights under existing fair housing laws.

### Farmers Home Administration

Farmers Home Administration has several programs available for both single family and multi-family residences within the community. FmHA makes loans and grants to provide rural residents with decent, safe and sanitary homes. Eligibility is based on adjusted household income, with low interest loans available to low income and very-low income applicants. An individual, organization or group organizing to provide housing may apply for a loan through the local FmHA District Director serving the area where the housing will be located. The City of Desert Hot Springs is served by the FmHA State office, located in Moreno Valley. The following programs are offered in the Desert Hot Springs area:

**Home Ownership Loans** are made to families or individuals who are without adequate housing and who are unable to obtain loans from private lenders at reasonable rates. Loans may be used to buy, build, improve, repair or rehabilitate rural homes, including manufactured homes. Loans can be made for 100 percent of the value of the property as appraised by FmHA. Normally, the maximum repayment term is 33 years.

**Home Improvement and Repair Loans** are made to bring substandard houses up to agency development standards. Loans of no more than \$10,000 may be repaid in up to 25 years.

**Conditional Commitments** for rural housing are assurances to builders or sellers that FmHA will make loans to qualified applicants if the homes offered meet FmHA standards.

**Very-Low Income Repair Loans** are made for repairs to make houses safe and to remove



health hazards. Loan limit is \$15,000, with a maximum repayment term of 20 years, and interest rate of 1%. Grants or loan-grant combinations are available to help very-low income elderly homeowners make necessary repairs to their homes. Grants may not exceed \$5,000 with a 20 year repayment period at a 1% interest rate.

**Mutual Self-Help Housing Loans** are made to a group of families who wish to work together to build their own homes. Loans are made on an individual basis, but the group must agree to work together until all houses are completed.

**Technical Assistance Grants for Self Help Housing** are available for public or private non-profit groups. Applicants must show a need for self-help housing, the professional expertise to supervise a project, and a lack of funding for this assistance.

**Housing Site Loans** may be made to public or local nonprofit groups for housing sites, including self help housing. Funds are for land, access streets and utilities, and have a repayment period of two years.

**Rural Rental Housing Loans** are made to finance apartment style housing, or to purchase and rehabilitate existing rental housing. Loans can be made to individuals, public agencies, cooperatives, and profit and nonprofit corporations. Except for public agencies, applicants must be able to provide moderate-cost rental units with other financing. Loans are repayable in up to 50 years with interest reductions in some cases.

**Congregate Housing Loans** offer persons 62 years of age and older, and handicapped persons semi-independent living quarters which may include central dining facilities, some housekeeping help, and other centralized services.

**Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants** finance rental units for domestic farm laborers with an interest rate of 1%. Although farm laborers are scarce in the City of Desert Hot Springs, grants of up to 90% are available for public or broadly based nonprofit organizations when the group cannot afford loan payments but has initial operating capital and income to manage the facility.

**Rental Assistance** payments are made to owners of FmHA financed rental projects to reduce the rents (including utilities) paid by low income tenants to no more than 30% of their incomes.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS

There are several multi-family projects which are currently subsidized by either County, State or federal agencies for low and very low income residents. Tenants wishing to lease affordable units must be in the very low or low income categories based on County median household income, which are defined by persons per household:

**Table III-21**  
**2000 County of Riverside Housing**  
**Program Income Limits**

| Persons/HH | Very Low | Low      |
|------------|----------|----------|
| 1          | \$16,600 | \$26,550 |
| 2          | 18,950   | 30,350   |
| 3          | 21,350   | 34,150   |
| 4          | 23,700   | 37,900   |
| 5          | 25,600   | 40,950   |
| 6          | 27,500   | 44,000   |
| 7          | 29,400   | 47,000   |
| 8          | 31,300   | 50,050   |

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2000

The following affordable housing projects are available in Desert Hot Springs:

**Bella Vista Apartments:** is a 216 unit project located at 66950 Ironwood. The project was constructed in two phases of 120 and 96 units. Phase I (120 units) apartments are restricted to households earning 60% or less of the County median. In Phase II 70% of apartments are reserved for households in this category, and 30% of the apartments are reserved for households earning less than 50% of the County median.

**Casa West:** is a 42 unit project restricted to seniors and the disabled only. The residents rent is restricted to 25% of their income.



**Country Hills Apartments:** is a 200 unit project located at 66900 Ironwood Drive. Forty (40) of the units are restricted to very low, low and moderate income households.

**Linda Vista Residences:** is a 72 unit converted hotel which provides studios and one bedroom apartments to seniors and disabled persons over 18 years of age. All households must be very low or low income.

**Quinto del Sol Apartments:** is a 42 unit project located at 13600 Don English Way. The project is owned and managed by the Riverside County Housing Authority. All rents are restricted to 30% of the household's income.

**Highland Homes** is a privately owned 12 unit project located at 13704 Avenida Hermosa. The project was financed by a FmHA 515 loan, approved in 1971 on a 40 year mortgage. The project is restricted to low income seniors and the physically handicapped.

**Waldorf Residences** provides 53 units to very low and low income seniors. The project converted a hotel into studio apartments, and also provides activities and meals to residents.

## CONSTRAINTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING

The supply of housing for households of all income levels is affected by a variety of constraints, some governmental and some non-governmental. These factors may affect the number of units built, the size and suitability of the unit, and the price of the unit. Some constraints are beyond the control of local governments, but others may be reduced or eliminated at the discretion of the local government.

### Governmental Constraints

The permit process can have a significant impact on the timely and cost-effective production of new housing. In Desert Hot Springs, the time required to process residential development varies according to the scope of the proposal. Planning Commission review and approval has been traditionally completed in 45 days from receipt of complete application materials. Projects requiring City Council approval generally are heard within 60 to 75 days of

receipt of complete application materials. Building Department review of building plans is generally completed in 10 to 15 working days for complex projects which involve street improvements and structural analysis. The City's permit processing is rapid and expeditious, and does not pose a constraint to development.

### Application Fees

Different permits are charged different fees, based on the complexity of review involved. The following Table provides a listing of the City's planning fees.

**Table III-22**  
**City of Desert Hot Springs**  
**Planning Department Fees**

| Permit Type                              | Fee     |
|------------------------------------------|---------|
| Conditional Use Permit                   | \$1,175 |
| Architectural Review<br>(4 or more d.u.) | 575     |
| Initial Study                            | 375     |
| General Plan Amendment                   | 1,800   |
| Zone Change                              | 1,700   |
| Tentative Tract Map                      | 1,400   |
| Final Tract Map                          | 700     |

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs

The City Council may, and has in the past, waived fees for affordable housing projects.

### General Plan Constraints

The Land Use Element of the General Plan designates specific areas for different types of development and establishes density ranges for residential development. Zoning, which must be consistent with the General Plan, establishes more specific development standards, allowable uses, and limitations.

The City of Desert Hot Springs General Plan allows for the development of up to five units per acre in its Low Density Residential designation, ranging up to 14 units per acre in the High Density Residential designation. In addition, the Specific Plan overlay, available on a number of larger vacant areas in the City, has the



potential to increase density, based on a master planning approach. Existing approved Specific Plans in the City, including the Rancho Royale, Cornerstone, Olympus and Rancho Morongo Specific Plans, have areas of higher density based on density transfers from open space or recreational amenities. Finally, the Rancho Royale includes provisions for the mandatory inclusion of affordable housing in all components of the residential plan. None of the Specific Plans have begun construction at this writing.

## **Zoning Constraints**

The City's Zoning Ordinance establishes the specific uses allowed or prohibited for each land use designation, and specific development standards such as required parking and setbacks.

The City's Zoning Ordinance allows for density bonuses in conformance with the state-mandated 25% over the allowable density, in exchange for the dedication of a portion of the project housing as affordable. This provision is designed to mitigate the perceived constraint to affordability imposed by lower density designations.

Other provisions in the Zoning Ordinance impact the cost of housing in the City. Development standards can increase the costs of construction, and thereby increase the cost of the home to the buyer.

The City's development standards are listed in Tables III-23 and III-24.



**Table III-23**  
**Residential Development Standards**  
**Minimum Area Requirements for Residential Zones**

| <b>Zones/Uses</b>  | <b>Livable Area in Sq.Ft.</b> | <b>Bedroom Maximum Number</b> | <b>Parking Required</b>     |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Single Family      | 1,200<br>+200                 | 3<br>each additional bedroom  | 2 spaces in garage          |
| Apartments must be | 600                           | Studio                        | 1 1/2, one of which covered |
| Must Be            | 800                           | 1                             | 1 1/2, one of which covered |
| Must Be            | 1,000                         | 2                             | 1 1/2, one of which covered |
| Must Be            | 1,200<br>+100                 | 3<br>each additional bedroom  | 1/12, one of which covered  |

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance

**Table III-24**  
**Minimum Development Standards for Residential Zones**

| <b>Standard</b>                                           | <b>Low Density</b> | <b>Medium Density</b> | <b>High Density</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Units per Acre                                            | 5                  | 8                     | 14                  |
| Lot Area                                                  | 9,000 sq. ft.      | N/A                   | N/A                 |
| Lot Width                                                 | 60 feet            | 60 feet               | 60 feet             |
| Lot Depth                                                 | 100 feet           | 100 feet              | 100 feet            |
| Building Lot Coverage<br>(including accessory structures) | 40%                | 50%                   | 50%                 |
| Private Outdoor Living Space                              | N/A                | 100 s.f./unit         | 150 s.f./unit       |
| Building Height                                           | 1 story/17 feet    | 2 story/24 feet       | 2 story/24 feet     |

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance

The tables above illustrate that the development standards in the City do not represent an over-restrictive condition, and are not a constraint to development of affordable housing.

Projects including new residential construction are normally required to install all necessary on and off-site improvements, including a half-width of the paved width of the street, concrete curbs, sidewalks, water connections and sewer connections when available. Roadway standards for local or neighborhood streets which allow parking on both sides of the street have paved

width of 40 feet. Infrastructure improvements are in place at infill lots.

Actual requirements vary according to each specific site. The requirements for each project, in accordance with the City's General Plan, are intended to connect the project site with the City's existing infrastructure and provide for the needs of the project's residents.

The requirements to install infrastructure impact the cost of housing projects. However, the projects themselves need the infrastructure



improvements. In those instances where the infrastructure costs, in combination with other costs of construction, create economic infeasibility, the City may choose to subsidize the infrastructure improvements through the Redevelopment Agency.

### **Accessibility to Services**

The location of affordable housing must also take into consideration the proximity of services and facilities, including shopping, schools, and public transit. In the City's core, under current conditions, limited infill parcels are available which are conveniently located in this regard, with the exception of parcels on Two Bunch Palms Trail, west of Palm Drive. In the Specific Plan projects mentioned above, a mix of uses is generally proposed, which would encourage development of differing uses within each project. As development occurs, Sun Line Transit participates in the review of projects, so as to ensure access to public transit wherever possible.

### **Building Code Requirements**

The City has adopted and enforces the Uniform Building Code (UBC) to ensure all housing units are constructed to be safe for the occupants. The UBC is updated periodically, and the City updates its implementing ordinance accordingly. The UBC was developed by the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) and adopted by the State of California. The City cannot adopt standards that are less stringent than the UBC, which is used throughout California. Imposition of the UBC does not unduly impact the cost of housing in Desert Hot Springs in comparison to any other community in the State.

### **Building Permit Fees**

Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 and the resulting reduction in tax revenues, California cities have sought new ways to generate revenues. In many instances, cities have imposed new fees or increased existing fees to cover the costs of providing services to new development. School districts also charge a fee of \$1.84 per square foot of residential construction to offset the costs of providing new schools.

Estimated building department fees for residential development in Desert Hot Springs are shown in Table III-25. Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) fees for new construction provide exemptions for affordable housing projects.

It is clear fees raise the ultimate cost of housing to the consumer. However, cities generally have no other options for recouping the costs of providing necessary services to residents. Instead, cities may increase needed subsidy to achieve affordability.



**Table III-25**  
**Development Fees - City of Desert Hot Springs - 1996**

|                       | <b>Single</b>          | <b>Family</b>          | <b>Multi-Family</b>                                 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|                       | <b>1200<br/>sq.ft.</b> | <b>2000<br/>sq.ft.</b> | <b>Twenty Units:<br/>2 Bedrooms/1200<br/>sq.ft.</b> |
| <b>City Fees:</b>     |                        |                        |                                                     |
| • Building            | \$ 2,592.00            | \$4,320.00             | \$ 2,592.00/unit                                    |
| <b>Non City Fees:</b> |                        |                        |                                                     |
| • TUMF <sup>1</sup>   | 838.30                 | 838.30                 | 506.30/unit                                         |
| • School Fee          | 2,064.00               | 3,440.00               | 2,064.00/unit                                       |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>\$5,494.30</b>      | <b>\$8,598.30</b>      | <b>\$5,162.30/unit</b>                              |

<sup>1</sup> Fee Waived for affordable housing projects

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs

## Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement process is an area of regulation which has the potential to result in the loss of affordable units. Conversely, however, the Code Enforcement process provides protection to renters and homeowners from issues of public health and safety. In Desert Hot Springs, Code Enforcement has effectively been used in the past to force unscrupulous landlords to provide decent and safe housing to their low income tenants.

Code enforcement for structural or maintenance problems in the City are processed as in most cities in the Coachella Valley. A notice of violation is sent to the property owner, providing 7 days to repair the violation. If the repairs are not begun, an administrative citation can be issued, followed by an administrative hearing before the Director of Community Safety. If Code Enforcement is successful at the hearing, the department obtains a warrant to either repair or demolish the structure. If the City undertakes the repair, the property owner is billed. These requirements provide the property owner with every opportunity to correct a health and safety problem, and cannot be considered overly restrictive.

## Article XXXIV

Article XXXIV of the California Constitution requires voter approval of affordable housing developments when they are developed, constructed, or acquired in any manner by a public agency. Desert Hot Springs voters considered and passed an Article XXXIV referendum. The authorization was not for any specific site or project. Article XXXIV requirements do not apply to projects that are owned by a private developer, owned by a private non-profit organization, or contain less than 50% affordable units.

## ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS

Non-governmental constraints to affordable housing in Desert Hot Springs include the cost of land, cost of construction, and cost of financing. These factors are determined on a regional or national basis.

### Land Costs

The cost of land is an important component of housing costs. The rapid increase in land costs throughout Southern California has pushed up housing costs simultaneously. Land in the Coachella Valley has been, and remains, relatively affordable compared to other Southern California markets, but increased demand for housing due to population growth and in-migration will continue to put upward pressure on land costs.



Land in Desert Hot Springs has traditionally been more affordable than in other areas of the Coachella Valley. Parcels can range from \$8,500 to \$15,000 for an in-fill improved Medium Density residential lot, to \$35,000 per acre for a larger High Density Residential lot. With a maximum potential density of 14 units per acre, this represents a maximum potential cost per unit of \$2,500, assuming that no density bonus is involved in the project. Land costs in Desert Hot Springs, therefore, do not represent a constraint to development.

## **Construction Costs**

Construction costs are the result of the current costs of labor, materials, and short-term financing. Single family construction costs are estimated to range between \$46 and \$60 per square foot depending on home design and materials selected. Multi-family construction costs range from \$40 and \$60 per square foot, again depending on design. With a median sale price in 1996 in the City of \$60,000 for a three bedroom home, according to the Multiple Listing Service, the cost of construction and home purchase in the City is affordable.

## **Financing Costs**

Financing costs impact both the purchase price of the unit and the home buyers ability to purchase. Interest rates fluctuate in response to national factors. Currently relatively low (8% to 9%), they can change significantly and substantially impact the affordability of the housing stock. However, the City has implemented a First Home Buyer's program to assist in the purchase of a home for low and very low income households. There are no known mortgage deficient areas in the City. Financing for both construction and long term mortgages is generally available subject to normal underwriting standards.

## **PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS**

### **Maintenance of Housing Stock**

Housing stock over 30 years of age begins to deteriorate if not properly maintained. Tenants in rental properties are often unable or unwilling, and should not be expected to make extensive repairs and rehabilitation. Owners of older single family units and mobilehomes may also

not have sufficient income to make major rehabilitations. Unchecked, this deterioration of portions of the housing stock negatively impacts the supply of affordable housing.

Although the majority of housing in Desert Hot Springs is relatively new, 24.2% of the units in the City are 30 years of age or more.

## **Infrastructure**

Although most of the City's infill development sites are not constrained by the lack of infrastructure, there are a few areas with currently inadequate services, specifically in the area annexed as Annexation 22. This large area, totalling 8,060 acres, is primarily vacant desert with limited services. The annexation was undertaken in order to incorporate several master planned communities planned for the area. These master planned communities are required to extend services prior to development. The acreage involved in this annexation has not been calculated as part of this Housing Element as being available for immediate development. It is expected that this area of the City will see little short-term, and considerable long term growth. There is renewed interest in the Rancho Morongo Specific Plan, generating a potential for hundreds of housing units with adjacent commercial. Within the Cornerstone Specific Plan, all needed infrastructure is available. The project includes multi-family and service housing, as well as commercial components.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS**

### **Flooding**

The area between Little Morongo Road and Palm Drive in the City is subject to inundation from a 100 year storm event, due to its location adjacent to Big Morongo Wash. This area, and other smaller flood-prone areas in the City, are illustrated in the Flooding and Hydrology Element of the General Plan. Housing development could be impacted by flooding, and must therefore be considered a constraint. None of these areas, however, are prevented from developing. The standards imposed by the Riverside County Flood Control District must be complied with prior to the construction of any project.



## Seismicity

The City of Desert Hot Springs is bisected by the Mission Creek fault (the Coachella Valley's segment of the San Andreas fault), which runs in a southeasterly direction through the eastern half of the City. An Alquist-Priolo Study Zone has been established for this area. The Banning fault is also known to traverse the City's sphere of influence, and its location has been mapped in some areas. The location of known faults and fault traces is illustrated in the Geotechnical Element of the General Plan. All requirements regarding setbacks are enforced when development occurs within an Alquist-Priolo Study Zone, adding to the cost of development.

## HOUSING NEEDS

### The 1998-2005 Regional Housing Needs Allocation

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment was prepared by SCAG. The following table lists the 1998-2005 allocation for the City of Desert Hot Springs.

**Table III-26  
Future Housing Needs by Income  
Category  
1998-2005**

|                           | Units      |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Very Low Income           | 66         |
| Low Income                | 37         |
| Moderate Income           | 47         |
| High Income               | 84         |
| <b>Total Units Needed</b> | <b>233</b> |

## SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

Within the identified existing and future needs, there are households with identifiable special needs, as defined by the state. These groups include single parent households, farmworkers, the handicapped and the elderly. Each special needs category is discussed in greater detail below.

## Farmworkers

Farmworker housing is not an issue in the City of Desert Hot Springs. The economy in the upper Coachella Valley has not been agriculturally based in several decades. There is therefore no need for farmworker housing in the City.

## Homeless

Homelessness is a difficult issue to quantify. The homeless are generally mobile, often crossing from one city or county into another. The mild winter climate in the Coachella Valley may attract the homeless in those months. Hot summer temperatures encourage the homeless to seek daytime shelter in air conditioned public places such as libraries, malls, and other public buildings.

The primary provider of services to the homeless in the Coachella Valley is Catholic Charities, a non-profit, nondenominational organization. Catholic Charities staff reports that the reasons for homelessness include sudden job loss, illness and lack of medical insurance, family break-ups, and seasonal job layoffs or reduction in hours.

Catholic Charities and the County Housing Authority operate a 40 bed emergency shelter for homeless families. The shelter is located in Palm Springs, but serves the entire Coachella Valley region.

Shelter From The Storm is a battered women's shelter with a 60 bed capacity, located in the Coachella Valley. Women and their children generally stay up to 45 days. The Shelter provides three meals a day, counseling and other services.

Other groups of homeless individuals not served by the facility at Nightingale Manor include the mentally ill, those with chemical dependencies, and those who voluntarily choose a transient lifestyle. These individuals may be served by the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission, located in Indio, or by the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, located at the National Guard Armory in Indio, in the winter months. These facilities provide only emergency shelter and do not deal with the causes of homelessness. Facilities which provide recovery services as well as



shelter are limited and include the ABC Club and The Ranch. Both are located immediately outside the City.

## **The Elderly**

Desert Hot Springs has a large senior citizen population. In 1990, the City had 1,695 persons over the age of 65, or 15% of the population. These seniors were in a total of 1,254 households, 456 of which were renting their housing, and 798 owned their housing unit. Of those who rented, 69% were very low income households, 23% were low income households, and 7% were moderate or high income households. Of those who owned their housing units, 39% were very low income households, 26% were low income households, and 35% were moderate or high income households.

It is anticipated that the aging of the "baby boomer" generation will result in continued growth of the senior and elderly population.

Affordability can be an issue of special concern to the elderly, who are often on fixed retirement incomes. In addition, the elderly may require assistance with housekeeping, maintenance, and repairs to remain in their own homes as long as possible. Special design features that may be needed include elimination of barriers such as steps and the provision of recreational and social amenities for the elderly.

The City of Desert Hot Springs has a number of facilities for the elderly, including several board and care facilities which house elderly persons who require some level of medical care. As discussed previously, two vacant hotels have been rehabilitated as senior only residential facilities. Additionally, the City's mobilehome parks have traditionally been affordable housing alternatives for senior citizens.

## **Handicapped**

The 1990 Census identified 1,888 persons in the City with disabilities. No data is available regarding how many households are disabled households in the City.

Angel View Hospital, located at 12379 Miracle Hill Road, in Desert Hot Springs, provides residential services to developmentally disabled children and young adults. Angel View operates

7 assisted living homes within the City, each housing 6 clients, for a total of 42. These homes generally provide permanent housing for handicapped persons. Angel View is a non-profit organization which accepts private donations as well as medical insurance.

No data is currently available which correlates disability to income, and not all disabling conditions impact an individual's income or housing needs. Many disabilities, however, lead to special housing needs such as ramps, wider doors and hallways, lower cabinets and countertops, and grab bars.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all new multi-family construction include a percentage of units accessible to the handicapped. The City of Desert Hot Springs Building Department monitors and requires compliance with these standards as part of the Building Permit review, issuance, and inspection process.

## **AIDS**

The Desert AIDS Project (DAP) reports that as of May, 1997, 51 clients of the DAP reside in the City of Desert Hot Springs. Although other residents may be HIV-positive, most DAP clients have progressed into the symptomatic stages of the disease. As the disease progresses, persons with AIDS (PWA's) often become unable to work, lose their source of income, and lose their medical insurance. Housing affordable to low income people, including group homes and hospice care, become special housing needs of PWA's.

## **Large Families**

The 1990 Census indicates there are 515 households in Desert Hot Springs with five or more members. The Census also shows that there were 242 housing units in the City with four or more bedrooms, 11 of which had 5 or more bedrooms. Large families have a special need for three, four, or more bedroom units. No data is available regarding the relationship of these larger units to affordability.



## **Single Parent Families and Female Headed Households**

1990 Census data indicates there are 676 single parent families in Desert Hot Springs, 147 with a male head of household and 529 with a female head of household. The Census further estimates that 273 of these female-headed families had incomes below the poverty level.

Single individuals with dependent children need housing which is both affordable and located close to daycare facilities and schools.

Female headed households are predominantly a low income group. Compared to other households, this group:

- has low incomes and high poverty rates
- pay high percentages of income for housing
- has a low home ownership rate
- has high rates of overcrowding
- is younger

The 1990 Census indicates there are 1,024 children under 18 years of age in Desert Hot Springs living in families whose incomes are below the national poverty level. Of these, 574 live in female headed households.

Primary housing needs include affordability and units of sufficient size.

## **Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation**

Desert Rehabilitation Services operates two residential facilities in or near the City of Desert Hot Springs. Hacienda Valdez, located on Quinto Way, is a women's program with a 35 bed capacity. The Ranch, located on Annandale Avenue, just north of the City, is a 46 bed facility.

## **Affordable Units at Risk**

Many of the programs used throughout the Coachella Valley during the past twenty-five years to subsidize rental and ownership housing included time limits on affordability restrictions. Federal mortgage revenue bond regulations also have limitations on the number of years affordability restrictions remain in effect.

Recently, the earliest of these affordability restrictions have begun to expire. This problem,

which may result from an early payoff of project financing or an "opting out" of Section 8 contracts, can have significant impacts on the communities in which these projects are located. For rental projects, the elimination of rent level restrictions has recently become particularly attractive to building owners as a result of several independent factors. The original owners of many affordable projects invested because of rapid depreciation, which created extraordinary tax shelter benefits. Many of those benefits have expired. Additionally, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 altered the federal tax structure for residential income property.

Many projects were re-syndicated after 1981 to take advantage of changes in the tax structure at that time. Many of these re-syndications were accomplished through short-term financing with second mortgages. Pressures from rapid growth, and the desirability of the Coachella Valley, compound the problem by increasing the demand and rental prices for market rate rental units.

The California Coalition for Rural Housing described the ideal candidate for conversion or opting out as having the following characteristics:

- The project would be located in a suburban or rapidly urbanizing rural area.
- It would be in good physical condition and in a good location to command a market rent.
- The market area would be characterized by high growth, escalating housing costs, and low vacancy rates.
- The project would have rent levels lower than the prevailing rents for comparable units.
- The current owner would have a deferred second loan that is coming due, or have experienced tax shelter burnout either as a result of having accelerated the loss, or having lost the shelter through the imposition of tax reform.

Although the City has no units at risk of conversion within the next 20 years, policies need to be established to ensure all new projects with an affordable component maintain their affordability for the longest feasible time.



## Riverside County Income Limits

The 2000 median income calculated for Riverside County for a family of four is \$47,400. This is used to calculate very low (50% of median) and low (80% of median) incomes for use in State and federal subsidized housing programs.

**Table III-27**  
**Affordable Housing, Income Limits**  
**County of Riverside, 2000**

| # of<br>Persons | Annual<br>Income Standards |          |          |               |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|
|                 | Very<br>Low                | Low      | Median   | Moder-<br>ate |
| 1               | \$16,600                   | \$26,550 | \$33,200 | \$39,850      |
| 2               | \$18,950                   | \$30,350 | \$37,900 | \$45,500      |
| 3               | \$21,350                   | \$34,150 | \$42,650 | \$51,200      |
| 4               | \$23,700                   | \$37,900 | \$47,400 | \$56,900      |
| 5               | \$25,600                   | \$40,950 | \$51,200 | \$61,450      |
| 6               | \$27,400                   | \$43,800 | \$54,750 | \$66,000      |
| 7               | \$29,400                   | \$47,000 | \$58,800 | \$70,550      |
| 8               | \$31,300                   | \$50,050 | \$62,550 | \$75,100      |

Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development, Income Limits for Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, 2000

## Households Overpaying for Housing

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) estimated existing lower income households (1988) overpaying for shelter as part of the 1989-1994 Regional Housing Needs Analysis (RHNA). Of the 2,249 total lower income households in the City, the following number were paying more than 30% of their income toward housing expenses.

**Table III-28**  
**Lower Income Households**  
**Overpaying for Housing - 1998**

|              | Total<br>Over-<br>paying | Very<br>Low<br>LIHHs | Low<br>LIHHs |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Renters      | 1,640                    | 1,283                | 330          |
| Owners       | 583                      | 286                  | 159          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>2,223</b>             | <b>1,569</b>         | <b>489</b>   |

Source: SCAG RHNA, 1998

## Preservation of Mobilehome Parks as an Affordable Housing Opportunity

The 1990 Census estimated that a total of 2,249 households in the City are defined as Very Low or Low income. Traditionally, mobilehome parks have provided an affordable housing opportunity, particularly for senior citizens. The long term preservation of these mobilehome parks, therefore, will have a direct positive impact on the City's lower income residents. Table III-29 Provides a listing of the City's mobilehome parks, and their representative rental rates.

**Table III-29**  
**Representative Mobilehome Park**  
**Market Rates in**  
**Desert Hot Springs 2000**

| Project Name<br>(total units) | Senior<br>Only | Monthly<br>Rental |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Quail Hollow (260)            | Yes            | \$199.00          |
| Hogan's (10)                  | No             | Varies            |
| Mountain View (105)           | No             | \$275.00          |
| Sky's Haven (191)             | Yes            | Varies            |
| Desert Willows (43)           | Yes            | Ownership         |

Source: Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc. 2000



## Apartment Rental Rates

The median monthly rental rate for Desert Hot Springs was \$498 in 1990. Based on the 30% gross household income standard, a monthly income of \$1,600, or annual income of \$19,200, is needed to afford a rent of \$495 per month. In order to gauge the affordability of housing in the City, a telephone survey of representative projects was conducted.

**Table III-30**  
**Representative Apartment**  
**Market Rates in Desert Hot Springs**  
**2000**

| Project Name<br>(total units) | Unit<br>Size | Rental<br>Rate   |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Sandy Palms (46)              | 1 1 Bdrm     | \$415.00         |
|                               | 45 2 Bdrm    | \$525.00         |
| Bella Vista* (216)            | 1 Bdrm       | \$350.00         |
|                               | 2 Bdrm       | \$395.00         |
|                               | 3 Bdrm       | \$495.00         |
| Casa West* (48)               | 48 1 Bdrm    | \$312.00         |
| Casa del Sol (108)            | 1 Bdrm       | \$332.00         |
|                               | 2 Bdrm       | \$361.00         |
| Country Hills*(200)           | 1 Bdrm       | \$365.00         |
|                               | 2 Bdrm       | \$410.00         |
| Desert Horizon*(44)           | 20 1 Bdrm    | \$365.00         |
|                               | 16 2 Bdrm    | \$415.00         |
|                               | 8 3 Bdrm     | \$465.00         |
| Quinto del Sol*(42)           |              | 30% of<br>income |

\* Units are subsidized through CHAFA, HUD or other programs.

Clearly, the City's market rate housing is at a level which is a far greater value than other Coachella Valley cities, and represents an affordable housing opportunity for most households.

## Energy Conservation

The hot summer climate in Desert Hot Springs and the need for cooling makes energy conservation particularly important. Title 24 and Building Code regulations require energy efficiency in all new construction of housing through design features, insulation, and active solar devices.

An undesirable side effect of requiring energy efficient new construction is an increase in the cost of construction of new housing. When evaluating energy efficiency standards above and beyond the State-mandated Title 24, local jurisdictions must balance the increase in the cost of housing with the reduction in monthly utility bills for the user.

Land use patterns also impact energy conservation. Infill and concentrated land use patterns minimize travel time and distance to work and shopping destinations. Mass transit is most efficient when traveling major corridors that link population centers and employment centers. More rural land use patterns discourage mass transit and alternative modes of transportation such as buses in favor of automobiles, contributing to energy consumption.

The City's development regulations, building regulations and General Plan enforce the standards required in Title 24, as well as providing encouragement for the use of energy efficient construction techniques.



## QUANTIFIED OBJECTIVES

**Table III-31**  
**Quantified Objectives Matrix**  
**1998-2005**

| Income Category       | Very Low | Low | Mod-erate | High | Total |
|-----------------------|----------|-----|-----------|------|-------|
| New Construc-<br>tion | 66       | 37  | 47        | 84   | 233   |
| Rehab.                | 10       | 15  | 20        | 0    | 45    |
| Conserva-<br>tion     | 5        | 5   | 0         | 0    | 10    |

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation was included in every phase of the development of this Housing Element. The General Plan Advisory Committee held publicly noticed and advertised workshops to discuss the Element and its goals, policies and programs. Members of community groups which serve low income and senior households attended these workshops regularly, including representatives from the Senior Center and others. The Element was also reviewed in public workshops and hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

## HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

### GOAL 1

A variety of housing types that meet the diversity of needs within the City.

### GOAL 2

Expanded housing opportunities for all residents of Desert Hot Springs.

### GOAL 3

City housing stock which meets the needs of the City's lower income households.

### GOAL 4

The preservation and maintenance of the City's affordable housing supply in a safe and sanitary condition.

#### Policy 1

The General Plan shall provide for a mixture of residential densities dispersed throughout the City.

#### Program 1 A

The City shall monitor and assure the adequate supply of vacant land in all residential zoning categories.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Schedule:** Immediate, On-going

#### Program 1 B

The City shall review and revise its residential development standards as needed, to ensure that a variety of housing types are provided which meet or exceed the City's standards.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Schedule:** On-going

#### Policy 2

The City's residential development standards shall adhere to the General Plan's Community Design Element policies.

#### Policy 3

Affordable housing developments shall be encouraged in all areas of the City. Clustering of affordable housing shall be discouraged.

#### Program 3 A

The City shall require an annual Community Reinvestment Act report from local banks. Efforts at equal opportunity housing loans should be documented.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** 2001, Annually

#### Policy 4

The City shall continue to allocate set-aside funds to Redevelopment Agency programs to meet the State-mandated special shelter needs of first time home buyers, large families, female headed households, single parent families, senior citizens, handicapped and homeless individuals, and shall work with new developments to expand the opportunities for these households.



#### **Program 4 A**

Continue to support and assist in enforcing the provisions of the Federal Fair Housing Act. Information on the Fair Housing Act, as well as methods for responding to complaints, shall be available at City Hall. The materials shall also be provided to the City Library and Post Office for distribution.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Schedule:** Immediate, On-going

#### **Program 4 B**

The City shall work with private organizations in assisting whenever possible in the housing of handicapped residents, through continued participation by the Redevelopment Agency, Senior Center, and other appropriate agencies, and through allocation of set-aside funds when available.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency, Senior Center; Angel View Hospital

**Schedule:** Immediate, On-going

#### **Program 4 C**

Maintain provisions for the development of homeless shelters and transitional housing as a conditional use in the Zoning Ordinance.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Schedule:** 2001

#### **Policy 5**

The City shall emphasize the protection of existing affordable senior housing units.

#### **Program 5 A**

The City shall monitor existing mobilehome parks, and shall consider the allocation of housing set-aside funds to correct health and safety concerns as they arise.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** Immediate, On-going

#### **Policy 6**

There shall be equal access to housing regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, family status or sexual preference.

#### **Policy 7**

The City's existing and new affordable housing shall be maintained through the use of resale and rental restrictions, applicant screenings, and other appropriate mechanisms established as conditions of approval.

#### **Program 7 A**

The City shall keep in regular contact with the Riverside County Housing Authority to ensure that Section 8 housing assistance within the City is actively pursued.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department

**Schedule:** 2001, On-going

#### **Program 7 B**

Should any affordable housing project, as enumerated in this Element be considering conversion to market housing, the City shall contact non-profit corporations which might consider purchasing the project. The City and its Redevelopment Agency will also support these organizations in securing financing for such purchases.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** On-going

#### **Policy 8**

The City's Redevelopment housing set-aside funds shall be used for all types of affordable housing, but shall be focussed to provide moderate income housing within the City.

#### **Program 8 A**

The Redevelopment Agency shall annually allocate funds to eligible projects as they are presented to the Agency for review and consideration.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** On-going

#### **Policy 9**

Any project considered for assistance must:

1. Provide a minimum of 20% equity or financial contribution to the project by the developer.
2. Designate a minimum of 25% of the units for very low income households.
3. Restrict all of the units to remain affordable for a period of 20 years.

#### **Program 9 A**

The City shall standardize its qualifications and application materials for private developers seeking City financial assistance for the development of affordable housing.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** 2001



**Program 9 B**

Provide a Housing Incentive Package which describes for developers the types of incentives available, including land write downs, Mortgage Revenue Bonds, and/or the use of CDBG funds for the provision of necessary public facilities or design costs.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** 2001, On-going

**Policy 10**

The City Council shall consider, as an additional incentive, the reduction, subsidizing or deferring of development fees to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

**Policy 11**

The City shall apply density bonus provisions to affordable housing projects, as allowed by State law.

**Policy 12**

The City shall encourage low and moderate income ownership projects, which provide for either self-help incentives, or first-time homebuyer incentives.

**Policy 13**

The City shall encourage the rehabilitation of existing housing units.

**Program 13 A**

The Redevelopment Agency shall maintain its grant programs, funded through the allocation of set-aside funds, for affordable housing, as enumerated in this Element, and shall consider adoption of programs for aesthetic and structural maintenance of existing housing units.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency

**Schedule:** 2001, On-going

**Policy 14**

State law regarding the relocation of displaced lower income households shall be strictly enforced.

**Policy 15**

Promote the development of housing with convenient access to commercial land uses and employment centers to provide for special needs households, particularly elderly and handicapped households.



# PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Element is to describe the City's existing public parks, trails, bikeways and other public and private amenities, and to identify the need for additional lands and establish goals, policies, programs, and implementation strategies. The goals, policies and programs for parks and recreation are an expression of the community's needs and desires for active and passive recreation opportunities. Many of the residents and visitors of Desert Hot Springs choose to spend their leisure time outdoors in some form of recreation or exercise activity. Parks provide easily accessible open space areas, recreational facilities, and organized sports areas, allowing people to have direct contact with the natural and man-made environment. In addition to attracting all types of users within the City, parks and recreational facilities play an important role in attracting new residents and tourists, a key to economic growth.

## BACKGROUND

The Parks and Recreation Element has a direct relationship with the land use map in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Existing and future park sites and trails are shown on the land use map and have a bearing on the suitability of adjacent land use designations. The Parks and Recreation Element also has connections to the Open Space and Conservation Element with regard to trail usage in open space corridors and mountain environments. The recreational functions of City parks also relates to the Arts and Culture Element and to Public Buildings and Facilities Element.

The statutory references for park land dedications are found in the Subdivision Map Act. Specifically, Government Code Sections 66477 and 66479 require park site dedications, or fees in lieu of dedication, to relate to local population estimates and general plans. Recreation uses are included in the description of land use elements in Section 65302(a). Trail

designations are also required as part of Section 5076 of the Public Resources Code.

In 1994 the City prepared a Parks and Recreation Element for the General Plan (from a 1977 Master Park Plan), which became the basis for the current Parks and Recreation Element. The Park Master Plan included an assessment of local park needs, with a focus on playing fields, athletic courts, meeting rooms, and sheltered picnic areas. A supply and future demand analysis formed the basis for proposed additional park facilities to serve residents of Desert Hot Springs. An important ingredient in the 1977 park needs analysis was the inclusion of park facilities in the northern, southern, and southeastern portions of the City.

The three types of parks serving the Desert Hot Springs area are community, neighborhood, and mini- (pocket) parks. Mini-parks are considered either passive (parks meant for the enjoyment of sitting, picnicking, and hiking) or active (parks with sports fields, exercise equipment and playground areas). In addition to these traditional park facilities, there are additional types of facilities utilized in Desert Hot Springs, including an interpretive park, and golf courses.

## Types of Parks

According to the National Recreation and Parks association, there are three types of parks that can serve the immediate community: community parks, neighborhood parks or playgrounds, and mini-parks. A balanced mix of these facilities will address the need/demand of the City and its changing demographics.

## Existing Parks and Trails

There are seven existing parks in Desert Hot Springs. *Arroyo Park* is a 3.97 acre park located between West Drive and Cactus Drive on Arroyo Drive. The park includes two tennis courts, one basketball court, a roller hockey area, a tot lot and picnic areas. Built facilities in the park include restrooms, outdoor shuffle



board area and an indoor shuffle board building. The indoor shuffle boards are used every weekday and have been resurfaced, but the exterior courts are not used.

*Wardman Park* is a 6.6 acre park located at the northwest intersection of Eighth Street and Cactus Drive. Wardman Park includes a Recreation Building, a ballfield, a playground, a tot lot, a Youth Center and a swimming pool. It also provides picnic tables, turf, tennis courts, and a sand volley ball court. The facilities are well used by residents because of the wide variety of activities that can be provided.

The *Mission Springs Park* is located on the south side of Park Avenue, east of Palm Drive and behind the Agua Caliente Hotel. Encompassing 12 acres, this park has recently (1997) been expanded to include one dedicated ballfield with lights, one dedicated soccer field with permanent goals, one large multi-use field with two permanent baseball backstops, and room for 2 additional soccer fields, a tot lot, restrooms, off-street parking and a snack stand building. As of 1997, Mission Springs Park will host the annual "Big Bang" celebration, a popular local Fourth of July fireworks display, previously held at Wardman Park.

*People's Park*, provided by Desert Hot Springs Cablevision as a public amenity, is a neighborhood mini- or pocket park located on the northwest corner of Palm Drive and Yucca Street. Only a half acre in size, it provides a grass and tree area with concrete paths and picnic tables.

*Corsini-Eastside Park* is a 21.02 acre park located behind Corsini Elementary School on Hacienda Avenue and Don English Way. This park provides picnic tables, mature trees and turf, and an extensive system of nature trails. This park is intended to serve as the City's original General Plan goal to integrate nature trails into the City.

*Hot Springs Park*, a 3 acre park completed in 1996, was developed as an interactive or interpretive park and is located on the northwest corner of Palm Drive and Eighth Street. Celebrating the hot springs resort tourist industry, this park contains two adjoining sets of hot springs that have been routed for display to passers-by on the sidewalk and the street. It provides information describing the physical aspects of the hot springs, a pathway, a plaza with a "participatory" fountain, and a fairly large turf area.

*Constitution Park* is a .25 acre park that lies between and has been integrated with the Multi-Service Building/Senior Center, the Carl May Community Center/Council Chambers and the City Library on West Drive. It is a pocket park with mature trees and turf, a permanent outdoor chess table and benches.

In addition to park and recreational facilities, reciprocal privileges have been coordinated with the Palm Springs Unified School District at the high school site for recreational use by the City Parks and Recreation Department. The Desert Hot Springs Boys and Girls Club also has a facilities use agreement with the District, which allows the Boys and Girls Club to use the District's facilities for various youth programs.

Hiking and equestrian trails in Desert Hot Springs are primarily located along the wash areas and the foothills, providing access to trails in Joshua Tree National Park area and the Morongo Canyon Preserve. A trailhead exists at the mouth of Long Canyon and provides parking for cars and horse trailers, as well as providing handicapped access. An information kiosk is located one-half mile northeast of Hacienda Drive and just east of the existing city limits.



## **The Morongo Canyon Preserve and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)**

The Morongo Canyon Preserve and ACEC is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and is located in the Little San Bernardino Mountains north of the Coachella Valley. Limited portions of the ACEC are located within the Desert Hot Springs northern sphere-of-influence. The ACEC was expanded in 1998 from 3,705 acres to 29,000 acres, and includes both public and private lands. Big Morongo Canyon ACEC has been designated to protect a desert oasis where perennial surface water supports an extensive willow and cottonwood forest. A considerable trail system is incorporated into this Preserve; the Desert Hot Springs area is most locally served by the Big Morongo Trail, located at the mouth of the canyon. A number of important resources exist in the ACEC, the most important being the year-round availability of water supply that supports habitat for several sensitive wildlife and plant species, and has historically attracted native peoples and pioneers to the area.

This forest provides habitat for the endangered least Bell's vireo, and attracts birds to what has become an internationally famous birdwatching site. Big Morongo also serves as a "way station" for large mammals, such as desert bighorn sheep and mountain lions, which migrate between the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountain ranges.

### **Parks and Trails Funding**

The extent to which the City of Desert Hot Springs will plan and implement parks and trails facilities is related to the availability of funding sources. The Quimby Act was established as state law in 1965 to provide a funding mechanism for park land acquisition. Residential subdivisions must dedicate park land or pay an in-lieu fee to enable the City to acquire park land on a ratio of three (3) acres of parklands and facilities per 1,000 residents. Based on the City's anticipated growth and population characteristics, it is expected that the Quimby Act requirements will provide sufficient land for the City to satisfy its projected park needs. The Quimby Act does not provide dedication or fees for the City's trail system.

A variety of funding sources are being pursued for the construction of parks and bicycle paths in Desert Hot Springs.

The sole source of parks maintenance funding is the City-wide annual assessment. Currently (2000) set in Zone "B" at \$.88 per linear foot of street frontage, and in Zone "A" at \$40.57 per parcel. This assessment will presumably increase when additional parks are added to the system.

## **PARKS AND TRAILS PLANNING**

The parks and trails planning process should include a local needs analysis, taking into account the particular demographic characteristics of Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors. The needs analysis should be adjusted for any unique opportunities and constraints that exist or may occur in the future. The following park and trail categories should be considered in the preparation of the City's parks and trails plan.

### **Mini-Parks**

Mini-parks, or pocket parks, are very popular in new housing developments. They are sometimes called "tot lots" or "sitting parks". For this reason they are considered specialized facilities that serve a concentrated, limited population, or specific group, such as very young children or seniors. They are generally less than one acre and are intended to complement adjacent uses. Mini-parks can often substitute for private open space in employment centers or high density residential areas. Frequently, mini-parks are located inside a neighborhood, within or in close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouse developments, senior housing or any other complexes that require added recreational space. Because of their small size and limited activity areas, mini parks do not count towards meeting the active recreational needs of the community and are not included in the license tax or Quimby fee calculations.

In Desert Hot Springs, *People's Park* and *Constitution Park* represent City-owned mini-parks. Mini-parks often are sited on property leftover from development and, therefore, are not designated for specific sites in the City's Parks and Trails Plan. Mini-parks add to the



community's design and local quality of life and should be encouraged as opportunities arise.

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide for the active and passive recreation needs of nearby residents in the vicinity of the park. Neighborhood park facilities typically include such features as picnic areas, large playgrounds and apparatus areas, game fields, wading pools and limited parking.



Special landscaping and public art may also be featured in neighborhood parks. Pedestrian and bicycle access is important for neighborhood parks to serve nearby residents. The design of neighborhood parks must carefully consider their physical proximity and relationship to adjacent homes to avoid any adverse impacts from noise, traffic or lights. Neighborhood parks can be developed as shared facilities between schools and the community as a whole.

The usual size of neighborhood parks is in the five to ten acre range. The ultimate size will depend on available land and its relationship to neighborhood residences. Although neighborhood parks should usually be within walking distance, the low residential densities and population characteristics justify a theoretical service radius of approximately 1.5 miles. The actual service area for a neighborhood park is often a function of the ease with which residents can access the park.

Neighborhood parks typically serve a population of approximately 5,000 residents. Based upon a Desert Hot Springs buildout population of approximately 193,456 permanent residents, the City would ultimately be well served by 30 to 40 neighborhood parks. This estimated demand should also consider the average age of the City's population.

For both Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors, neighborhood parks are an important asset. Neighborhood parks should be located on local public streets to facilitate safe and convenient access. One of the concerns often raised, however, is the fear that parks will attract outside influences and crime to the neighborhood. The design of neighborhood parks must consider safety and security issues to assure that they become and remain assets to the neighborhood.

Wardman Park and Mission Springs Park are the City's current existing neighborhood parks. As such, they attract residents and visitors from throughout the City and surrounding community.

## Community Park

Community parks are best suited for areas planned for intense development. Their uses include recreational facilities, or areas of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking and picnicking. This type of park should be easily accessible to the community it serves. Community-scale parks serve residents and visitors alike, and are typically associated with a central place or major public facility such as a school or civic center.



Community parks provide active and passive recreation opportunities on a larger scale than neighborhood parks. The desirable size for community parks ranges from 20 to 40 acres. Given the low population density of Desert Hot Springs the appropriate service radius for a community park is about five miles. Community parks typically include fields for organized



baseball, softball, soccer and football. Tennis complexes and a large swimming pool are often included in community parks. A community recreation building may also be provided for indoor sports as well as educational and cultural activities.

Passive recreational activities may include picnic areas, formal gardens and open space areas. Adjacent neighborhoods also utilize community parks; children's play equipment may also be incorporated into community park facilities. They can also serve as starting or rest points for multi-use trails.

Although of a smaller scale at 12 acres, Mission Springs Park also serves Desert Hot Springs' community park needs.

### **Bikeways**

Bicycle facilities are categorized in I, II, or III classifications. The Class I bikeway is a bicycle path completely separated from any street or highway. Class I bikeways only serve a recreational purpose for bicyclists. Their inherent pedestrian-bicyclist conflicts limit the use of the City's Class I system to relatively short non-commuter trips. The system of bikepaths/sidewalks is proposed to be expanded along arterials as roadway widening and development projects occur.

Class II bikeways are signed and striped bicycle lanes within the paved section of the street. Bicycle lanes are for one-way travel by cyclists, generally for longer recreational or commuter purposes. Class II bikeways are considered to be safer than Class I facilities due to fewer cyclist-motorist conflicts at driveways and intersections. It is possible for both Class I and II facilities to be located along the same street. This would allow for a choice based on cyclists' preference.

Currently (2000) most of the City's arterial streets are not sufficiently wide to allow for a four foot wide Class II bike lane along the curb. Inclusion of bike lane facilities in the General Plan will help implement CVAG's Non-Motorized Transportation Element for the Coachella Valley, a plan which is intended to facilitate alternatives to automobile traffic.

Class III bikeways are designated but unmarked bike routes on the street within vehicular travel lanes. Due to the inherent potential conflict with vehicular traffic, Class III bike routes are not recommended for Desert Hot Springs except where Class I and II facilities are not feasible and where an essential regional bicycle route connection is desired.

### **Hiking and Equestrian Trails**

Existing hiking facilities in Desert Hot Springs utilize non-paved trails in wash areas and the mountains. The public's use of mountain trails must be balanced with the need to protect wildlife habitat; mountainous water sources are critical to wildlife, and human disturbance should be limited during summer months.

### **Regional Facilities**

The City is fortunate to be located in a region containing several recreational facilities serving not only the local area but much of Southern California as well. Regional facilities include Joshua Tree National Park, the San Bernardino National Forest, Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Mt. San Jacinto Wilderness State Park, Big Morongo Canyon Preserve/Covington Park, Willow Hole/Edom Hill Reserve, and Coachella Valley Reserve.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

As future parks and recreational facilities are planned, consideration must be given to those who will utilize park facilities. If the senior population is increasing rapidly, consideration must be given to facilities that serve seniors and physically impaired members of the community. The Carl May Community Center houses a Senior Center which organizes senior activities and informational services. According to the Americans With Disabilities Act, all areas accessible to the public must also be accessible to disabled persons, including seniors. Issues include wheelchair accessibility, restrooms, and other special facilities needed to enhance accessibility for the elderly and disabled. Accessibility to parks and open spaces for these special groups must be taken into account when designing and developing parks within the City.



Parks also play an important role in attracting families with children, retirees, and tourists. As parks are developed, these areas should reflect the needs of the residents they serve. The City's park and open space areas shall reflect the pride and respect residents have for Desert Hot Springs' desert and mountain environment. Desert Hot Springs rural environment does not, however, replace the need for these vitally important recreational facilities, which are essential to encourage social interaction and community cohesion.

The City's parks and trails plans should regularly be reviewed for their relevancy to demographic and cultural trends in the region and Desert Hot Springs. The demand for traditional park space in Desert Hot Springs is affected by the recreational preferences of today's residents. Several major developments have been approved which will generate more part-time residents in private communities, with golf and tennis as the primary recreational activities. While it may be argued that such a demographic group will generate a lesser need for public parks with facilities for organized sports, public parks and open space provide the venue for social development and community cohesion. The City will continue to experience an increase in school age children, which will affect both school and park planning in the future. The City's recreational facilities planning should keep in step with these projected population trends.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

A balanced quality system of parks, trails and recreational areas that support a broad range of activities, as well as cultural, and passive open space enjoyment opportunities for current and future residents.

#### **Policy 1**

Update and maintain the City's Master Parks Plan to assure adequate parklands, trails and open space lands meeting or exceeding developed parkland acreage standards as stated in the Quimby Act.

#### **Program 1 A**

Initiate a comprehensive study and analysis to result in an updated Master Parks Plan. The plan shall define the types, amounts and amenities planned for current and projected needs. It shall also detail Quimby Act requirements and other feasible financing scenarios.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Parks Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** 2001-02

#### **Program 1 B**

On a neighborhood level, the City shall conduct an analysis of current and future park/open space needs and incorporated analysis, conclusions and programs into the City Master Parks Plan.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Parks Commission; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** 2001-02.

#### **Policy 2**

The City shall plan, develop and maintain quality outdoor recreational and open space areas, which utilize and enhance the unique aspects of the desert environment and are properly developed for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

#### **Program 2 A**

The City shall investigate the broad range of possible sources of purchase financing and operation revenue, including park development fees and donated lands, as collected in accordance with the Quimby Act, and other financing programs offered by the State.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Program 2 B**

Implement a standard parks-per-population ratio of five acres per 1,000 new residents.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall institute a Parks Improvement Program to provide improvements needed for the park system to meet current and projected requirements.



### **Program 3 A**

The City shall develop and implement a Parks Improvement Program based upon the updated Master Parks Plan, which provides expanded and enhanced parks, trails and other facilities including adequate security lighting, grass areas, structured game areas and other improvements for optimized and safe recreating.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 3 B**

Install proper landscaping and irrigation systems, and institute proper turf management, in accordance with City water conservation strategies, on all playing or open areas, per the updated Master Parks Plan to enhance use and to make parks cooler and more comfortable.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 4**

Review and positively respond to the requirements in the Americans with Disabilities Act and special interest groups to assure provision of enhance accessibility in the planning and design of park areas, recognizing the needs of the disables, senior citizens, and those with special needs.

### **Program 4 A**

Enhanced accessibility shall be included in the planning of park areas, in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, including increased wheelchair accessibility, restroom, and other requirements needed for the elderly and physically handicapped.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 5**

The City shall evaluate alternative revenue sources, and use other forms of park financing and acquisition methods, to fund the purchase, improvement, and maintenance of the City park system, in accordance with the Quimby Act.

### **Program 5 A**

The City shall coordinate the establishment of an "Adopt a Park" or comparable program, allowing volunteer groups and individuals, such as the Rotary Club, the Hotelier's Association, utility companies, and others to take charge of maintenance, funding, and equipment needs for a developing park.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 5 B**

Vigorously pursue grant programs sponsored by public agencies, private groups, and foundations for park or open space purchases, development, and maintenance.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

The City shall consider and determine the feasibility and appropriateness of developing the full range of active and passive park space and facilities, including a community sports and aquatic complex, ballfields, nature parks, and other facilities.

### **Program 6 A**

As part of the planning process for the update of the Master Parks Plan, determine the feasibility and appropriateness of a community sports and aquatic complex, and estimate primary costs and possible financing.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2002-03

### **Program 6 B**

In the updating of the Master Parks Plan, consider the development and/or enhancement of public open space areas as passive nature facilities using interpretive nature trails to educate visitors on flora and fauna of the areas by developing nature trails with signs and markers.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2002-03



### **Program 6 C**

Parking areas should be developed in an aesthetic manner, integrating native plant materials to the greatest extent practical and appropriate. Native or complementary building materials shall be used to preserve the natural qualities of Desert Hot Springs parks.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Parks commission

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 6 D**

Evaluate the feasibility of establishing active joint-use agreements with all private non-profit organizations which have recreation facilities such as playfields and multi-purpose rooms. These agreements can help alleviate demand on existing parks and add flexibility to program scheduling while mandatory parkland is being developed.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 7**

Parklands development will be accomplished in a manner that remains consistent with the Open Space and Conservation Element, promoting water conservation and the preservation of the City's natural resources.

### **Program 7 A**

The Community Development Department shall confer with the MSWD and other specialists, developing and implementing water conservation measures that use xeriscape techniques, and desert landscaping.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Mission Springs Water District

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 8**

Encourage the addition of parks in areas relatively isolated from existing community and neighborhood park facilities.

### **Program 8 A**

The City shall identify, designate, and promote the development of parks and other appropriate recreation/open space amenities in the Parks Master Plan neighborhoods identified as being in need. Implementation strategies shall also be developed to secure land and assure that identified needs are met.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2002-03

### **Program 8 B**

Consult and coordinate with Riverside County regarding the location and development of regional parklands serving the entire western Coachella Valley.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Riverside County Parks and Recreation

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 9**

Participate in promoting parks events within the City to encourage public participation in sports and other community service activities.

### **Program 9 A**

Publish a Park Brochure, showing the location of all parks, the facilities they offer, and information on multi-use trails and access to other open space areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Chamber of Commerce

**Schedule:** 2002-03; Continuous.



# COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The Community Design Element defines, directs and guides coherent and satisfying patterns of development in the City of Desert Hot Springs, and is meant to assure that new development is balanced with the existing built and natural environments. The element provides consideration of all facets of urban design and planning and the natural spaces around them that subtly and profoundly shape the image of the community. This element helps to establish basic criteria, promote good and thoughtful design, and enhance community cohesiveness and coherence. The City's essential values should be reflected in the design of the community and its physical development, which should enhance the lives of residents and visitors alike. In this regard, the Community Design Element provides a general set of principles that will guide decision makers in the design review process.

The Community Design Element is intended to describe and define the essential design issues particularly relevant to the City of Desert Hot Springs. These include the high value placed on the City's image as a destination spa resort residential community and the valuable natural resources and their continued preservation and enjoyment.

## BACKGROUND

There is a direct relationship between the Community Design Element and the Land Use, Circulation, and Open Space and Conservation Elements. Attitudes toward land use, traffic, community safety and appearance, and the desert environment reinforce cohesion and continuity, uniqueness and a special sense of place. On a more basic level, the Community Design Element reflects sensitivity to community quality, environmental sensitivity and a desire to preserve the best qualities of this spa resort residential community, while addressing the more practical and functional needs of its residents, businesses and visitors.

Community design standards and criteria for development within the community is clearly recognized in California law as necessary and

appropriate. California Government Code Section 65302(a) addresses standards that affect population density and building intensity. Also applicable are laws providing local empowerment for preservation of open space lands as set forth in Government Code Sections 66477 and 65470. Most relevant is Government Code Section 65302, which states that "the General Plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals".

Other legislation reinforces the adoption of community design standards, including the 1990 California Legislature enactment of Assembly Bill 325, the Water Conservation In Landscaping Act, which recognizes the state's responsibility in mitigating the effects of urbanization on its finite water resources, and the potential savings from water conserving landscape practices. In accordance with the act, the City has adopted a water conservation-oriented landscape ordinance, which meets conservation targets and addresses community design concerns.

In sustaining and enhancing the quality of life in the City of Desert Hot Springs, the community clearly declares and puts into effect the essential goals and policies of the General Plan. Environmentally and aesthetically sensitive design is essential to the preservation and enhancement of the resort residential character and property values of the community. The scale and scope of land use patterns, management of transportation, flood control facilities and community open space and conservation areas must respond and complement the human and greater environment to reflect the City's long-term community character envisioned in the General Plan.

## Natural Systems and a Basic Strategy

Substantial environmental effects result from development and population growth, which can be best addressed through a thoughtful integration of the natural environmental systems with those of the built environment. By developing and projecting a holistic picture of the mature City, and with a sensitivity to site-



specific design/development, these ideas provide the basis for innovative uses of old and new approaches.

For instance, flood control channels are viewed not only as storm drains but also as opportunities for development of wildlife corridors and as enhanced open space for hikers, equestrians and biking enthusiasts. The City General Plan also espouses resource conservation practices such as building designs that conserve energy, recycling valuable resources, reducing exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment, and reducing demand for water by integrating the desert landscape with the built environment. Combined, these strategies value and preserve essential resources while expanding economic growth and opportunity (See Public Utilities Element).

## **Foundations of the Community Design Element**

The technical and philosophic basis for community design is most important in its actual effects on the design, development and build-out of the City. With major local, state and interstate roadways passing through the City and its Sphere, and the associated dependence on and commitment to automobile travel, enhancing the character and quality of life in Desert Hot Springs depends on three major areas of focus: continuity, uniqueness and "placemaking".

### *Continuity*

The continuity of Desert Hot Springs is a recognition and continuation of characteristics handed down over time that create connections to the natural and historic features of the City and the Coachella Valley. The challenge of living in the desert is undeniable and demands respect for the larger environment and the history and character of the community. The City's established tradition of integrating the desert into design and development, a sense of elevation and perspective, attention to environmental conditions, and predominant neighborhood scale of development are the backbone and the reflection of community life.

Continuity in design can be maintained through an adherence to the essentials of scale and proportion, materials and color, and site and setting. The integration of the natural desert environment into the urban fabric also extends the continuity in design of the community.

Within these essential principles, a variety of architectural styles can be supported, including adobe, mission style and modern derivations of each, as well as modern designs ranging from the International Style to fantasy architecture.

The desert provides a dramatic and flexible palette for design, as well as clear constraints and opportunities to living in a dry and sunny climate. The use of native and other drought tolerant landscaping also extends the continuity of the desert into the built environment. The use of gravels, rocks and boulders further enhances the continuity of the built and natural environments.

### *Uniqueness*

Desert Hot Spring's natural setting and its elevated position at the top of the Coachella Valley are highly recognizable characteristics that define the City as a unique and special place. A distinctive feature of Desert Hot Springs is the spectacular mountain and desert vistas as viewed from throughout the community. By integrating the natural environment through thoughtful grading and re-vegetation, and the use of building and landscape materials indigenous to the area, the character of the community and its setting can be preserved and enhanced. With world-class natural and built environs that attract vacationing visitors, second home residents from all walks of life, artists, professionals and others that value Desert Hot Springs' special environment, the City has unique and valuable assets upon which to build.

The uniqueness of Desert Hot Springs can be preserved and enhanced through adherence to quality design standards, including thoughtful and controlled grading and site development. Encouraging the re-integration of native desert and other appropriate drought-tolerant landscaping materials will also preserve and enhance the City's uniqueness.

A wide variety of native and introduced plants make up the local landscape palette; ocotillo, barrel cactus, encelia, agave, date palms, California fan palms, and a wide variety of cactus and succulents and are essential symbols of the community and provide endless design opportunities. The emulation of the natural landscape and the enhancement of wildlife habitat furthers the unique and marketable qualities of the community.



### *Placemaking*

With extensive opportunities to improve the sense of continuity in the community, the City's unique environment can serve as an important basis for making Desert Hot Springs a special "place" or "destination of distinction" in the Coachella Valley. Existing and future design shall continue to emphasize quality planning, design, materials and craftsmanship essential to assuring structures and other aspects of the built environment of which the City can be proud. Moreover, quality design standards in most thoughtful development need cost no more, and can cost the community much less than poorly conceived and insensitive design. The near and long-term benefits to the community of well conceived design and quality development are significant.

Desert Hot Springs, the Coachella Valley and the local environs of the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts are destinations for millions of visitors each year. With the effective creation of a regional sense of place, the City can host developments and environs that are local attractions that already include world class resorts and many unique and desirable residential developments and sites. Nonetheless, many opportunities must be pursued, including commercial and other types of non-residential development that can also provide an important basis of "placemaking" in Desert Hot Springs.

### **Opportunities for Variation in Community Context**

The beauty and delicacy of the background desert and mountain environments, and those portions of the built environment that we cherish and hope to preserve are the primary context within which community design judgements are made. The sharp contrast between the natural and built environment is a unique opportunity for community design. The level of assessment and the appropriate perspective will vary with the land use and location being considered. For instance, residential development proposed on highly exposed slopes, and industrial development plans require distinctly different design review criteria. In every instance, new development is required to respect its location and the scale and character of the surrounding built environment,

while other concerns will stand out when considering various types of proposals.

### **Harmony and Disharmony**

The character of Desert Hot Springs is reflected both in the high degree of harmony between the built and natural environment, and the limited but highly visible disharmony of development within parts of the City. A wide range of siting and architectural design opportunities are available and should allow the City to retain the low intensity resort-residential community character in new development. Adhering to height limits, the use of natural materials, and complementary colors and tones for building surfaces, and the generous integration of open space into community design concepts are more in keeping with the essential character of Desert Hot Springs.

Nonetheless, flexibility and sensitive design evaluation, and the ability to see the positive qualities of various architectural styles are also essential to a responsive design review process. If quality design is lacking and cannot be secured from the developer or architect, then unsatisfactory development proposals should not be approved. Sensitive design harmonizes with surrounding buildings, avoids excessive disruption and does not overtly compete for attention.

Contrasting design approaches should avoid being abrasive and seek a civilized and lively integration with the existing and planned built environment. It is equally important not to homogenize the design elements of a neighborhood, leaving it a boring repetition of elevations, roof lines and building materials and colors, or to promote an eclectic collection of styles.

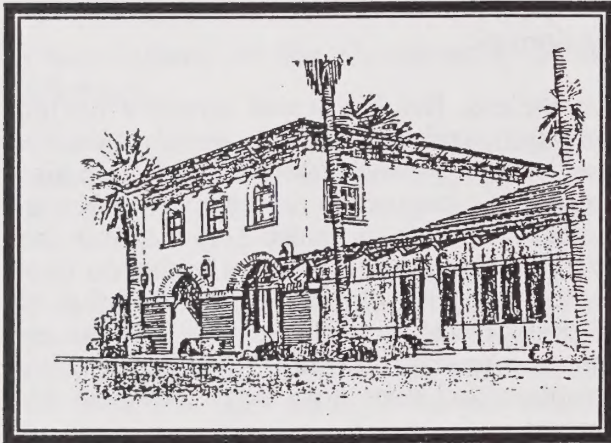
### **Criteria for Evaluating Building and Site Design**

Evaluation of building and site design should focus on the relationship of new and in-fill development to other structures and the larger environment. Scenic, architectural, landscape architectural resources, and the established character of a neighborhood provide a basic frame of reference for proposed development. Planning and design criteria assist in



determining a project's compatibility with the surrounding area. These criteria include:

- \* Site Analysis and Development Planning
- \* Building Height
- \* Building and Structural Setbacks
- \* Proportions and Massing
- \* Pattern and Rhythm of Structures
- \* Roof types and Materials
- \* Surface Color and Texture
- \* Building Projections
- \* Architectural Details
- \* Landscape Architectural Treatment



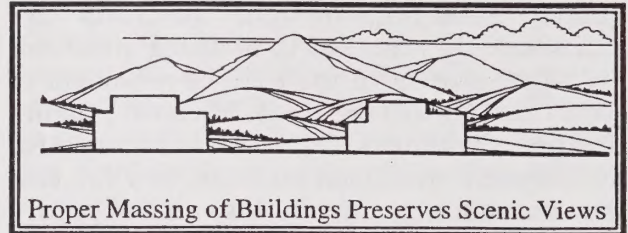
### Site Analysis and Development Planning

In all development, site analysis provides one of the most important and frequently under exploited opportunities to understand the limitations and possibilities of the site. Interest regarding development on highly exposed sites with valued scenic resources may conflict with the scenic, open space, and/or community design goals of the community. Site analysis and efficient development staging can help limit the amount and cost of grading, can maximize lot and building orientation, and provide a site and structure that optimizes the opportunities and the constraints of the development site.

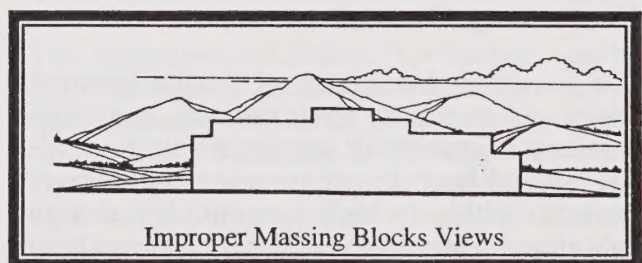
#### *Building Proportions, Height and Setbacks*

New structures should be similar in height to and compatible with other buildings in the vicinity, and with the goal of preserving and enhancing design qualities of the built

environment while preserving viewsheds. Setbacks should be compatible with those of surrounding structures and scenic resources, providing building presence without allowing the structure or development to dominate other buildings, the streetscape or the natural scenic viewshed.



The proportions of proposed residential, commercial or industrial structures will also affect their compatibility with site and surrounding conditions. Establishing a relationship between existing and planned development must be carefully considered. New development may set a standard that is meant to rejuvenate a neighborhood, giving it greater influence in establishing future design criteria for that neighborhood. Occasionally, it may be more appropriate for new development to be equivalent or subordinate to older structures and the prevailing development pattern. Generally, however, height and width of building elevations should not be dramatically out of character with existing neighborhood development or natural scenic viewsheds.



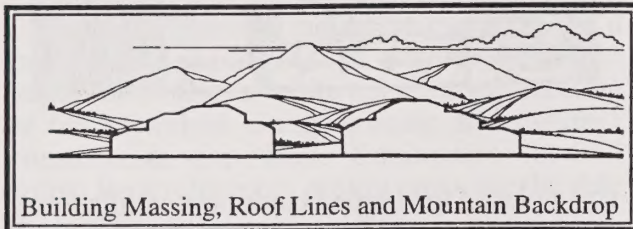
#### *Pattern and Rhythm in Community Design*

Nature makes and human communities strive to adopt natural and instinctively pleasing patterns and rhythms of motifs and massings in community development. How well these elements are handled can range from harmonious to dissident or clashing relationships. The recurrent alteration of peaks and slopes of the hills and the mountains can be emulated and complemented in the design of building roof lines, and in the space and solids



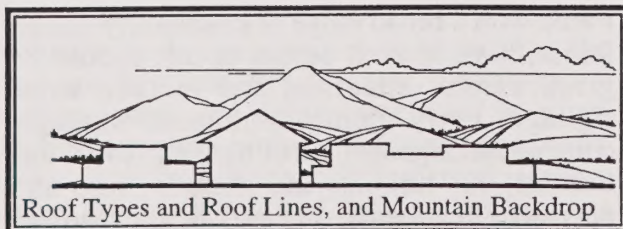
of buildings. The development of pattern and rhythm establishes a theme when viewed in the context of surrounding development. At close quarters, pedestrians should be provided with a varied integration of structure and landscaping to soften and tie the structural elements to the natural ones.

### *Roof Types and Materials*



The rhythmic patterns in new buildings and landscape architectural treatments should complement and integrate with the established structures and surrounding natural environment. Roof types and materials can play a critical role in either complementing or degrading the natural scenic viewshed.

Roof types, from flat to multiple arrays of hipped roofs, provide a range of possibilities for contrasting or imitative treatment. Unnecessary building heights are frequently related to roof design and the desire to create a particular type of space within the structure. Roof design must be balanced with the building elevation it helps to create. The same design concerns of scale, pattern and rhythm are applicable to the compatibility of roof design and materials.



### *Surface Texture and Color*

Prevailing sunny conditions in conjunction with the light color of the surrounding desert and light vegetation make the selection of surface texture and color especially critical to

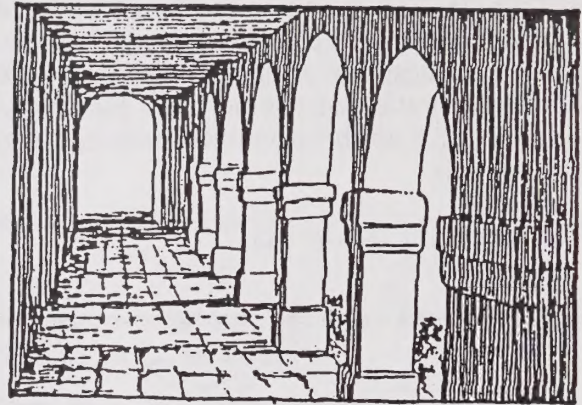
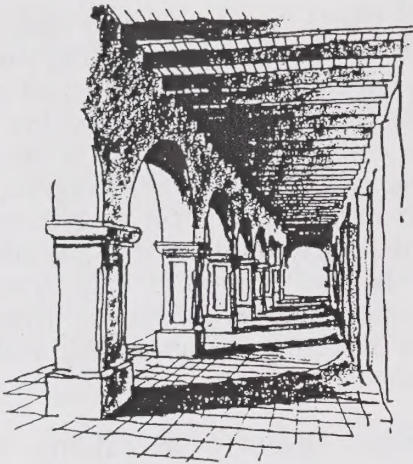
compatibility issues. Surfaces that emulate the coarse, warm tones of the surrounding valley and hills are highly desirable, while slick and shiny finishes produce glaring surfaces that do not integrate well with the viewshed or are not pleasing to the eye. However, the emergence of post-modern and other hybrid architectural styles, with their juxtaposition of architectural motifs and the use of contrasting, unusual colors and building materials, are examples of how contrast can be made compatible within broader standards.

Surface texture differs from patterns and rhythm in that texture is provided on a substantially reduced scale and seldom acts as a strong design element that is equal in effect to architectural pattern or massing. Styles change with time and while the use of strong color may play a dominant part in the design of structures, color is easier to change once development has occurred. The use of texture ranges from smooth adobe-type stucco or plaster to fluted, split-face concrete aggregate block. As with other elements of design, texture must be used carefully so as to complement the overall design while being compatible with surrounding materials.

### *Building Projections and Architectural Details*

Much of a building's design is expressed in the detail and projections that grow out of the building envelope. Building projections and other architectural details play important functional and aesthetic roles in a building's efficiency as shelter and appearance. Providing privacy and screening from the elements, projections and architectural detail also affect how well the building harmonizes with surrounding development. The use of porches and verandas can further enhance residential living space and provide protection from sun and wind. While simple and ornate architectural detail may each represent legitimate design principles, buildings of each style may clash or contrast with surrounding development, and suffer from the comparison. The appropriateness of a particular building design must be viewed within the context of the building's natural setting and man-made environment.





## Site Planning and Community Design

Site planning involves the distribution of buildings, parking, driveways and landscaped open space areas over a site. It establishes the development's relationship to the street and surrounding lands. The impacts of site design are not always easy to visualize and assess without the development of a detailed site plan. Frequently, the complexity or importance of a proposed development may make it appropriate to require the preparation of perspective renderings of the plan and structures.

Care should be taken not to allow artistic applications of color, landscaping and graphic "eye wash" to obscure or misrepresent the final product as it will actually appear on the development site. Together with building architecture, site planning is the critical design parameter determining the compatibility of proposed development with the existing development in the area and the character of the community.

## Special Design Areas

In addition to the architectural character of community design, other elements must be addressed when considering the community as a whole. These include areas with important landmarks and focal points, which lend identity and character to the community. Landmarks or focal points may include natural, historic, architectural, or cultural areas of interest.

Examples of developed landscape architectural elements include the Hot Springs Park on the corner of Eighth Street and Palm Drive, which provides a public park environment profiling the unique conditions that produce our hot mineral waters. Landscaping elements, monumentation, signage, site furnishings, and open space areas should all be considered in the development standards and policies for landmark or focal point enhancement.

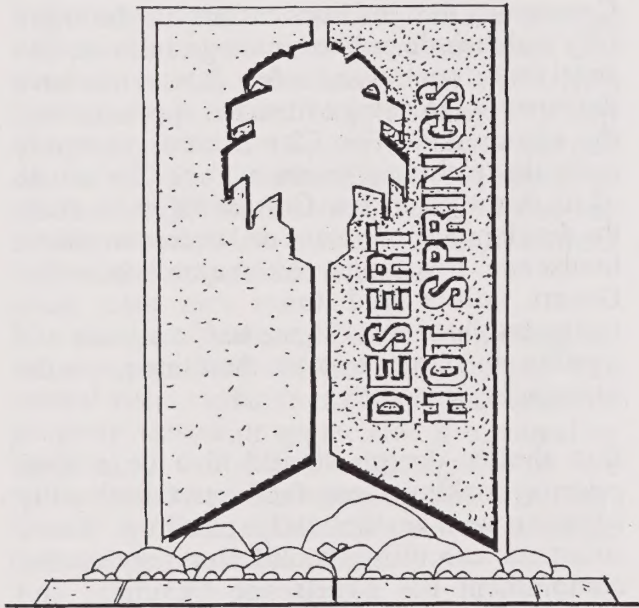
Other special design areas include major entry points to the City and its neighborhoods. Important opportunities exist for the noticeable and distinctive transition into the incorporated boundaries of the City of Desert Hot Springs. Entry points offer the opportunity to incorporate many of the elements of community design into a quality entry statement. The provision of adequate area for significant landscape or architectural treatment, City entry signage, special paving, and other identifiable treatments all lend character and identity to City entry and other focus points (also see Scenic Highways discussion in this element).

Faced with a broad range of community design issues, development design details should be given careful attention, and include street signage, entry point monument signage, commercial signage, street lighting levels and fixtures, bus turnouts and shelters, curb and pavement treatments, median islands, roadway reflectors and guardrails, on-road graphics, streetscape treatment and landscaping, and utility structures and facilities.



## Signage and Viewsheds of Public Rights-of-Way

The Palm Drive commercial corridor is the most frequently traveled, and is most impacted by signage of businesses attempting to make their existence and location known. It may be appropriate in some instances to encourage the retirement of existing signs inconsistent with the goals, policies and programs of the General Plan and applicable ordinances. Enhancing commercial signage should be conducted in a manner that minimizes the adverse economic impact on business, while assuring a restoration of the viewshed along existing and planned commercial corridors. Businesses located within Redevelopment project areas may be able to participate in and benefit from RDA sponsored sign renovation programs.



## Transportation and Community Design

A broad range of transportation-oriented community design issues must be faced as the community continues to grow. Development design issues and details that must be given careful attention include street signage, entry point monument signage, commercial signage, street lighting levels and fixtures, bus turnouts and shelters, curb and pavement treatments, median island and parkway design and landscaping, roadway reflectors and guardrails, bike lanes and other on-road graphics, and utility structures and facilities.

Such items as sidewalks must be given careful attention to assure pedestrian safety while preserving the resort residential character of the community.

The Palm Drive corridor is an essential and critical component of community design in Desert Hot Springs, providing arterial circulation in the City while effectively linking the City with other Coachella Valley communities. Many functional and community design goals can be achieved through the detailed design and planning for Palm Drive ultimate buildout south of Two Bunch Palms Trail. Revitalizing Palm Drive is essential to establish and communicate Desert Hot Springs assets, character and identity. The safe, functionally efficient and aesthetically pleasing design and buildout of Palm Drive is a key element in the City's overall economic health and prosperity.

## Neighborhood Design

The City of Desert Hot Springs prides itself on having a wide variety of neighborhood settings. Attributes that can make a neighborhood or private community unique include:

**Architecture:** Architectural commonality can be established throughout the neighborhood through the coordinated and complementary use of various design components, including building colors, roof design and tile color, window and garage door treatment and architectural building accents and details. These components should be mixed to create a balance of variety, compatibility and conformity or cohesion.





**Perimeter Wall/Fence Treatment:** Perimeter walls and fences are now being more widely used in residential design in the City. Walls and fences define the borders of residential communities and are used in perimeter landscape treatments for a variety of other development types in the City. Designs may consist of wrought iron, stuccoed concrete block, plain and painted slumpstone, split-faced block, plastered, brick-capped or tile accented, and intermittent columns or pilasters. Walls and fences may be straight, stepped or meandering. Interspersing solid walls with wrought iron fencing provides views into development open space areas and relieves the closed in feeling that walls can engender. While walls may vary in height, they are generally not to exceed six feet above grade.

In addition to closing off developments from the public right-of-way, continuous solid walls can create the above-mentioned canyon effect. Wider parkways provide additional wall set backs and landscape treatment that reduces the enclosed feeling. The integration of wall breaks and fenestration along public rights-of-way help to integrate private community open space and viewsheds with those of the traveling public. The City should encourage the continued use of this type of viewshed window as a means of reducing the tunnel effect and preserving scenic vistas.

**Parkway Landscaping:** One of the most prominent and visible exterior features of neighborhoods and private communities is parkway landscape treatments. Design can range from the formal to the “natural” or combinations of both approaches. Formal design may include ordered rows of date palms or other distinctive tree, regularly interspersed with equally ordered shrubs and beds for annuals plantings. More informal designs seek to imitate nature by interspersing native and non-native desert plantings in more of a free-form or random pattern. Groupings of major elements and the use of lawn areas may also be integrated into both more and less formal designs.

### Community Design in Public Facilities

Community design issues encompass the entire City and include public buildings, utilities, and street traffic control and safety devises that have the potential to detract from the appearance of the community. The City must consistently make the quality appearance of the City as one of its prime priorities. Current efforts include the development of unique and distinctive desert landscape treatments on major roadways. Desert colors and tones can also been integrated into street signs, traffic signals and lighting standards to soften their impact on the surrounding viewshed.

Bus shelter design should also be a high priority, making these facilities functionally superior and aesthetically pleasing. These structures can utilize architectural styles that complement the streetscape treatment and elevate the appearance of these utilitarian structures. Utility cabinets located along the street, including traffic signal and telephone switching facilities are frequently painfully obvious. Efforts to have these installed in underground vaults has been resisted but more success has been had with having these highly visible facilities painted more neutral desert colors. Likewise, overhead utility lines present visual obtrusions to the natural setting and may pose safety hazards which should be minimized by a program of utility undergrounding.



## **Scenic Highways and Major Entry Points**

Some of the most important community assets are the scenic resources of the Coachella Valley, including the San Jacinto, San Bernardino and other mountain ranges surrounding and encompassing the City, and the desert floor. Preservation of these scenic vistas has been an important goal of the community. However, various types of land development, the construction of buildings and walls, landscaping, roads and the extension of utility lines and other facilities have all impacted and threatened to degrade the scenic resources of the community.

The City's natural scenic beauty, as viewed from public thoroughfares and private lands, provides residents and visitors with a direct experience of the dramatic landforms that define the character of the community. The protection and enhancement of the City's viewsheds is critical to promoting a quality image of Desert Hot Springs. An essential part of this effort is the identification of important areas of significant natural scenic value and setting standards to preserve these resources with continued urban development.

The scenic resources of Desert Hot Springs are most apparent to the traveling public. The natural vistas visible from City streets cannot be properly viewed or appreciated if screened by buildings, walls and landscaping or the indiscriminate placement of signage. The City, County and State are all active players in scenic resources preservation efforts.

Desert Hot Springs has a variety of important entry and focus points, which provide opportunities for reinforcement of the City's identification and scenic viewshed enhancements. The integration of monuments and appropriate signage, as well as special streetscape and landscape treatments, can be used to reflect the community's unique character. Focal points can be located anywhere along major routes, including important street corners, within parks and other public open space, civic buildings, schools and historic areas.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Community design considerations, including preservation and enhancement of scenic highways, can subtly and profoundly shape the image of the community. Establishing basic criteria to promote good and thoughtful design that enhances community cohesiveness and coherence will allowed Desert Hot Springs to emerge as a thriving and marketable residential resort community. Community Design considerations are directly related to issues associated with land use, traffic, arts and culture, health and safety, economic development and environmental systems.

The Community Design Element can be implemented by several mechanisms, which include the thoughtful application of the other Elements of the General Plan, the City Zoning Ordinance, and through Redevelopment Plans and Specific Plans for individual project areas. The most effective instrument will be the Zoning Ordinance, which sets forth specific standards and establishes design parameters and guidelines for site planning and building design. On the zoning district level, the Zoning Ordinance will assure that development occurs in a manner consistent with the design goals of the community.

## **COMMUNITY DESIGN GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOALS**

#### **Goal 1**

City-wide design and development which enhances the community's distinctive character as a desert-oriented resort residential community and preserves and enhances the natural scenic resources in harmony with the built environment.

#### **Goal 2**

Variety of community design, architecture and landscaping compatible with the City's desert setting and surrounding development.



## **POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **Policy 1**

Private and public sector development projects shall equally apply City community design standards, thereby protecting the community's scenic viewsheds, providing community cohesion and enhancing the image of Desert Hot Springs as a resort residential community.

### **Program 1 A**

Amend and maintain an appropriate comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and other regulatory documents, which define the design parameters within which public and private development projects must perform. Comprehensive application packages and document outlines shall be prepared and maintained to guide the preparation of Specific Plans, Conditional Use, Development Plan and other permits, and assure a thorough review of all community design issues.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** On-going; Review annually.

### **Policy 2**

The planning and design of residential neighborhoods shall provide distinctive and characteristic design elements along public rights-of-way within the project creating a recognizable sense of place.

### **Program 2 A**

Encourage the use of site-sensitive planning in new development, varying setbacks with adequate minimums, and varying designs, elevations and facade articulations.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 3**

Multi-family residential projects shall provide well-designed and neighborhood enhancing living space, usable and safe private and common open space areas, adequate parking and appropriate automobile storage, screened trash enclosures, a comprehensive landscape program, and perimeter walls and fencing.

### **Program 3 A**

The Zoning Ordinance shall include design standards for multi-family development, including Planned Residential Developments (PRDs), that assure variety of design, the provision of safe and secure common open space, adequate parking and appropriate automobile storage, a comprehensive landscape program, perimeter walls and fencing where appropriate, and neighborhood-enhancing design.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 4**

Commercial development and mixed use projects shall consist of integrated designs that incorporate safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian-oriented circulation, safe and convenient ingress and egress, shared parking, screened outdoor storage/loading and other noisy or unsightly areas, protected outdoor seating areas, lighting, signage and the planting of mature landscaping to provide an immediate effect of permanency and quality.

### **Policy 4 A**

Review all commercial development plans to assure pedestrian-oriented circulation, visually and functionally integrated design safe and convenient ingress and egress, screened loading and other noisy or unsightly area, protected outdoor seating areas, and the planting of mature landscaping to provide an immediate effect of permanency.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 5**

Detailed landscape architectural and special signage designs, which reflect the character of the development, shall be required for City and project entries, scenic roadways and other City focal points.

### **Policy 6**

Establish vista points with interpretive displays, rest areas, and information kiosks which could be developed at key locations along scenic corridors and elsewhere in the City.



### **Policy 7**

Integrate native and other appropriate desert landscape materials and site-sensitive architectural designs into all public and private building projects to enhance the community's cohesion between the built and natural environment.

#### **Program 7 A**

Take every opportunity to integrate native and other appropriate desert landscape materials and site-sensitive architectural designs into all public building projects to enhance the community's environmental and resort residential character.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development and Public Works Departments; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 8**

Walled residential and commercial development projects shall be designed to provide views into these developments from the public right-of-way through the use of wall breaks or fenestration, but in a manner that does not compromise privacy, security or interior noise levels.

#### **Program 8 A**

Development proposals which include walls shall be reviewed for the appropriateness of integrating wall breaks or fenestration along public rights-of-way.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 9**

Signs shall be limited to the minimum size, scale and number needed to provide functional identification and exposure necessary to convey messages, while minimizing impacts on traffic safety, streetscape and scenic viewsheds.

#### **Program 9 A**

The City shall develop and implement signage regulations in the Zoning Ordinance, which addresses all aspects of sign review and establish finite periods by which existing non-conforming signage shall be replaced.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council.

**Schedule:** 2002-03

### **Policy 10**

Lighting shall be limited to the minimum height, number and intensity of fixtures needed to provide security and identification in residential, commercial and industrial development, taking every reasonable measure to preserve the community's night skies.

#### **Program 10 A**

Develop a lighting standards ordinance as part of the Zoning Ordinance, which sets specific standards for lighting levels, acceptable types of lighting and fixtures, and location of lighting control in relation to adjoining and nearby properties and public rights-of-way. The ordinance shall include a lighting retirement program, which establishes finite periods by which existing non-conforming lighting and fixtures shall be replaced.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** 2003-4

### **Policy 11**

Incorporate the City image/logo or other appropriate City identification into entry features, street signage, public buildings, planters and median islands, benches and other streetscape furnishings, City vehicles and other similar applications.

#### **Program 11 A**

A comprehensive image development and application program shall be completed to assure the most effective use of the City logo on all City vehicles, signage, street signs and other appropriate locations throughout the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development and Public Works Departments

**Schedule:** On-going

### **Policy 12**

Development proposed along designated scenic highways, roadways and corridors shall be reviewed for compatibility with the natural and built environments to assure maximize viewshed protection and pedestrian and vehicular safety.



#### **Program 12 A**

Map and otherwise define those scenic corridors that are designed for scenic roadways and establish development guidelines to protect and enhance scenic values along those roadways.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate: On-going.

#### **Program 12 B**

Architectural review within scenic corridors shall include review of building massing and design, heights and setbacks, and exterior colors and materials for compatibility with the natural environments. The use of natural materials and appropriate colors shall be encouraged, with materials such as reflective surfaces to be discouraged.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 12 C**

Scenic roadway streetscape designs, which enhance street appearance and provide safer vehicular and pedestrian movements, shall be programmed into the City's roadway capital improvements program. Said program shall also establish development guidelines to protect and enhance scenic values along these roadways.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate: On-going.

#### **Policy 13**

Overhead utility lines shall be undergrounded to the greatest extent practical through the establishment of an undergrounding program and guidelines. Overhead utility lines along scenic roadways shall have first priority for City and other funding for utility undergrounding.

#### **Policy 14**

Water wells, utility substations, switching and control facilities associated with same shall be screened to preserve scenic viewsheds and limit visual clutter.

#### **Policy 15**

Development projects located at sites identified for major and minor City entry and focal features shall dedicate the required land for the development of these landmark features.

#### **Policy 16**

All grading and development proposed within scenic highway viewsheds, including hillsides, entry and focal points, shall be regulated to minimize adverse impacts to these viewsheds.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

Economic conditions in the City represent the most basic, essential and constraining aspects of the community. The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to provide a multi-dimensional picture of conditions in the City through a broad range of data and information. The element also explores the relationships between City government and its various activities, particularly land use policy, and the health of the local economic environment. As the City regulates development it must balance the need to generate adequate revenues against the need to support existing and anticipated levels of public services and facilities. This Element is also intended to examine the economic characteristics and opportunities of the community, and outlines a programmatic approach. It provides policies and programs that will help create a more viable commercial and industrial base, enhance development of a tourist-oriented community, broaden employment opportunities, and facilitate development of adequate public services and facilities.

## BACKGROUND

The Economic Development Element is directly related to all other elements of the General Plan. It is based upon California Government Code Section 65030.2, which mandates that all cities and counties develop economic goals and an analysis of fiscal implications on which to base land use decisions. The Element also examines issues set forth in Government Code Sections 65863.6 and 66412.3, which require cities and counties to balance the available fiscal and environmental resources against the housing needs of the region and the needs of their residents for public services. The health and vitality of the City's economy is particularly dependent on the opportunities and constraints identified and addressed in the General Plan. The economic activity of the community grows out of the complex interrelationships of the physical and economic environments, and the City and its regulatory and public service functions.

There is a direct but not all encompassing relationship between the amount and implied value of housing established in the Housing Element, and the amount and location of commercial and industrial land and development set forth in the Land Use Element. In the resort-residential market of the Coachella Valley, the utilization of open space through the Open Space and Conservation, and Parks and Recreation Elements is also important to economic development. The policies and programs of these and other General Plan elements will have a direct and indirect effect on the long-term economic prosperity of the community.

The earliest economic activity in Desert Hot Springs was the promotion of the healthful and life-enhancing effects of the City's hot mineral water, and available development sites with spectacular valley and mountain views. On the heels of the discovery of this marketable commodity followed real estate developers who saw the potential of the area's many assets. Residential and spa-related development increased in the City after World War II and created the base or foundation for a self-sufficient commercial/business district to prosper and grow. The City became an established resort-residential community, providing affordable housing and quality of life amenities but has continued to lack an employment base of adequate size or diversity.

### An Independent Path

The Desert Hot Springs Planning Area is unique in the Coachella Valley in that it lacks meaningful adjoining or nearby neighboring cities and the economic stimulation they can provide. While development of the "cove communities" has followed a sequence of development starting in Palm Springs, and while Indio and Coachella have built upon a stable and broad-based agricultural industry, Desert Hot Springs has had to cultivate its assets and opportunities on its own.

However, out of adversity comes diversity, and a wide range of opportunities should be pursued now and in coming years to build an independent and solid economic foundation for



the City and surrounding community. The obvious place to start is with the community's strengths. The hot mineral water resource, and the spas and hotels that exploit it, have a global market. But it must be made marketable and appealing. This means new and upgraded facilities and supporting commercial and business services.

Desert Hot Springs has served as an important provider of housing for all socio-economic sectors in a unique and breathtaking setting. While the City has been an important provider of affordable housing, a second and retirement home market is recently emerging which will broaden the City's economy and market appeal. A wide range of employment opportunities must also be developed to keep both residents and their taxable expenditures in the community.

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

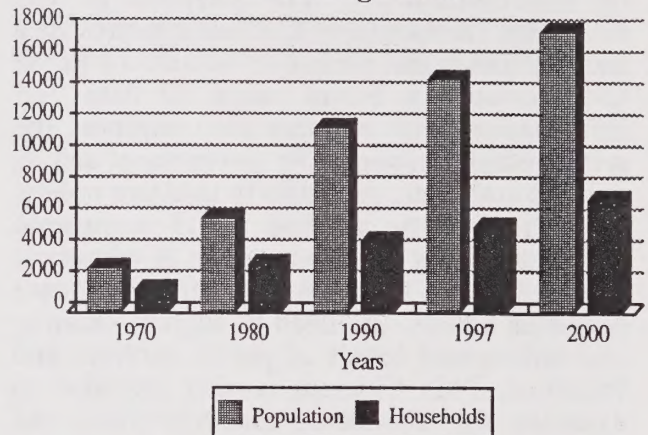
In order to map the City's economic future, it is necessary to know where we are and what have been the trends that have gotten the City to this point. A variety of data and information must be considered, including current conditions and trends in population, income, housing, retail sales, tourism, industrial development and employment.

### Population

From its incorporation in 1963, the City has grown from a population of 2,738 in 1970, to 11,668 in 1990, and 15,398 in 1999. The general trend has been for the City population to double every decade, as seen from the chart below. Population growth has slowed in the 1990s, with the general slowdown in economic activity in Southern California and the Coachella Valley. However, the City far outstripped Coachella Valley Association of Government (CVAG) growth projects made in the early 1980s.

Annexations have been very modest contributors to population growth, which has come from job growth in other parts of the Valley.

**Chart III-1**  
**City of Desert Hot Springs**  
**Population**  
**1970 Through 2000**



Source: Urban Decision Systems, Inc., Area Profile 1990-2000 for the Desert Hot Springs City Limits, Area Summary and the California Department of Finance.

### Household Size

Household size defines the average number of people living in a dwelling and does not include those living in group housing, although these numbers are not always segregated in the data and their effect on the average is very limited. The average house size in the City has increased substantially over the past few decades. In 1970, the City's average household size was approximately 1.9 persons. With continued population growth and increasing number of families with children, the average household size continued to increase, reaching 2.25 persons by 1980 and 2.52 persons by 1990. The average household size was estimated to have increased in 1999 to 2.81 persons. These numbers are comparable to the state of California's average household size, which was 2.8 persons in 1990.



### Median Age of City Population

Initially, Desert Hot Springs attracted retired residents and modest second home owners due to its superior environmental amenities, including hot mineral waters, spectacular scenery, clean and dry air, and rural life style. Since 1970, following the trend in family household formation, the median age of the community has decreased rapidly from 59.5 years of age in 1970, to 45.3 years in 1980. By 1990, the median age had fallen to 30 years and is projected to again drop modestly by the year 2000. The median age has significantly decreased since the City's incorporation but has recently stabilized. The median age in 1990 was 13 years younger than that for Palm Springs and slightly less than that of the County (31.5 years).

### Per Capita and Median Household Incomes

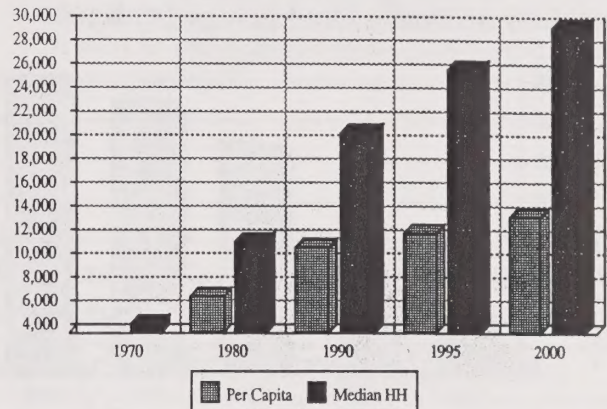
Along with the expansion of housing units and population has come a steady increase in the per capita and median household income. The per capita income levels increased from \$3,343 in 1970 to \$7,062 in 1980. From 1980 to 1990, the per capita income again rose to \$11,257, a 59.4% increase. The per capita income level is Currently (2000) estimated at \$12,406, a 10.2% increase from the 1990 income level.

The median household income in the Desert Hot Springs area has also shown increases over the last twenty plus years. In 1970, the median household income was approximately \$4,726, but had reached \$20,888 by 1990 and was estimated at \$26,264 in 1995, approximately a 25.7% annual increase since 1990. The following graph shows the increase in both income levels and provides projections for the year 2000, with per capita and median household incomes estimated to be \$13,876 and \$29,839, respectively.

The median household income in the City have been consistently below that of Riverside County on the whole, being 30% lower in 1980 and falling to a level 60% lower by 1990. In 1990, there were approximately 2,469 (21%) people living below the poverty line in Desert Hot Springs, with the most notable group being children (<18 years) which made up 41.1% of the total. Also, 10% of the City's seniors were living below the poverty line. These characteristics of the City population are similar

to those of the County population as a whole (also please see the Housing Element).

**Chart III-2**  
**Desert Hot Springs**  
**Per Capita and Median Household Income**  
**Trends**  
**from 1970 through 2000**



Source: Urban Decision Systems, Inc., Area Profile 1990-2000 for the Desert Hot Springs City Limits, Area Summary and the California Department of Finance.

The median household income for 1990 of \$20,888 was still considerably lower than that of Riverside County and the State of California, which were estimated to be \$33,081 and \$39,598, respectively. It is, however, evident that although Desert Hot Springs has not had a comparatively high income level, the rather constant increases in both the per capita and median household incomes add significantly to the economic development potential of the community. The increase of buying power and the expansion of the commercial base in the community has helped the City to expand its role as the commercial service district for a wide area.

### Housing Market Trends

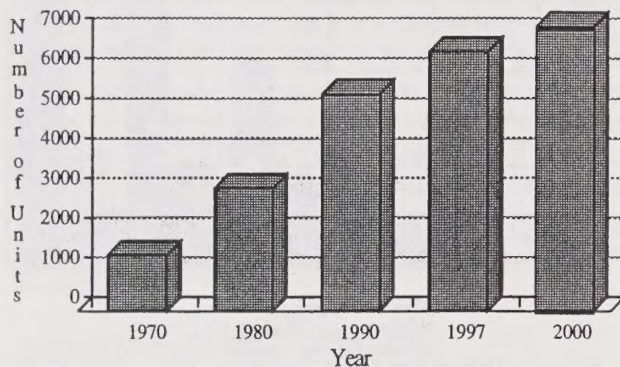
It is estimated that in 1970 there were approximately 1,431 housing units within the City boundaries, and 3,123 units by 1980, for an increase over this ten year period of 118%. From 1980 to 1990, the housing stock grew to about 5,494 units, increasing the number of dwelling units by 76%. The housing growth rates in the Desert Hot Springs area would appear to indicate an active and steadily growing economy over this period, however, this has not been the case as discussed below.



By January of 1999, the City is estimated to have a total of 6,563 units. Also, please see the Housing Element for additional information on this subject. The following graph illustrates the housing unit trends for the City from 1970 to 2000.

In addition, the following table shows a comparison of housing units in Desert Hot Springs in 1990 and 1999. It is evident that the majority of structures in the City are single family dwellings, which is to be expected in a suburban community.

**Chart III-3  
Housing Unit Trends for the  
City of Desert Hot Springs 1970-2000**



Source: Urban Decision Systems, Inc., Area Profile 1996 for the Desert Hot Springs City Limits, Area Summary and the California Department of Finance.

**Table: III-32  
Housing Characteristics for Desert Hot Springs  
1990-1997 Comparison**

| Year | 1 Unit | 2 to 4 Units | 5+ Units | MH, Trailers | Total Units |
|------|--------|--------------|----------|--------------|-------------|
| 1990 | 3,035  | 961          | 1,204    | 294          | 5,494       |
| 1999 | 3,921  | 1,085        | 1,224    | 333          | 6,563       |

Source: CA. Dept. Of Finance.

It is evident that most residential construction activity continues to be single family home development. These housing characteristics again emphasize the relatively low density and even rural character of the City, which is preserved through the high ratio of single family homes in relation to apartment complexes and mobilehome parks.

Desert Hot Springs, with its unique character and environment, is being considered more and more as an exceptional opportunity for the development of a full range of residential products from affordable housing to master

planned resort residential development. Home prices are lower than those found in most of Southern California and 35% lower than other communities in the Coachella Valley. Many residential areas are located on steep hillsides and expansive and elevated alluvial fans which provide spectacular and highly marketable views.

### **Employment and the Jobs/Housing Balance**

Desert Hot Springs is predominantly a bedroom community providing affordable and preferred residences for many who are



employed outside the community. In 1990, about 20% of the City's employed worked within the city limits; stated another way, almost 80% of the City's employed must leave the community to find employment. Palm Springs provides nearly 34% of the jobs held by City residents, followed by the City of Desert Hot Springs and then Palm Desert which employs 10.3% of the City's labor force. While the 1990 City employed labor force totalled approximately 4,517, there were only approximately 1,883 jobs available in the City, nearly 60% of which were held by non-City residents.

In 1990, two-thirds of the City population between the ages of 16 and 64 were in the local work force. As shown in the table below, most employed residents (51%) worked in the service sector (sales, administrative support, household services, protective and other services). County residents on the whole hold slightly more professional or managerial positions. While the number of employed doubled between 1980 and 1990, the percentage with jobs in each employment category did not change appreciably.

**Table III-33  
Occupations of Residents in the  
City of Desert Hot Springs 1990**

| Occupation                             | Desert Hot Springs |              | Riverside County |              |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
|                                        | Number             | Percent      | Number           | Percent      |
| Executive or Administrative Management | 339                | 7.3          | 56,732           | 11.6         |
| Professional Specialty                 | 332                | 7.2          | 55,646           | 11.4         |
| Technicians and Related Support        | 145                | 3.1          | 15,127           | 3.1          |
| Sales                                  | 593                | 12.8         | 62,315           | 12.8         |
| Administrative and Clerical Support    | 839                | 18.1         | 73,474           | 15.0         |
| Household Service                      | 26                 | 0.5          | 2,156            | .4           |
| Protective Service                     | 78                 | 1.7          | 10,002           | 2.0          |
| Other Services                         | 828                | 17.8         | 53,023           | 10.9         |
| Farming, Forestry, and Fishing         | 180                | 3.9          | 20,496           | 4.2          |
| Precision Production, Craft and Repair | 784                | 16.9         | 70,492           | 14.4         |
| Machine Operators and Assemblers       | 109                | 2.3          | 26,075           | 5.3          |
| Transportation and Material Movers     | 195                | 4.2          | 21,576           | 4.4          |
| Handlers and Equipment Cleaners        | 195                | 4.2          | 21,143           | 4.3          |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>4,643</b>       | <b>100.0</b> | <b>488,257</b>   | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: Urban Decision Systems, Inc. Area Profile; Desert Hot Springs Proposed City Limits, Area Summary, based on the US Census Bureau's 1990 Census, and the California Department of Finance.



**Table III-34**  
**Major Employers - 2000**

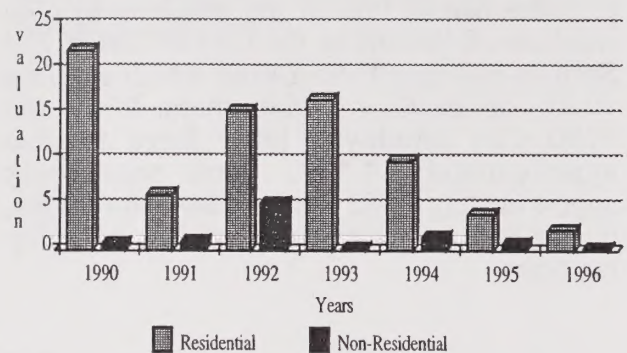
| Employers                                 | Number of Employees |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Palm Springs Unified School District      | 1,400               |
| Angel View Crippled Childrens" Foundation | 240                 |
| Miracle Springs Hotel                     | 95                  |
| Desert Hot Springs Spa Hotel              | 80                  |
| K-Mart                                    | 80                  |
| Stater Brothers Market                    | 75                  |
| Von's Market                              | 75                  |
| Mission Springs Water Dist.               | 33                  |
| Carl's Junior Restaurant                  | 33                  |
| McDonald's Restaurant                     | 32                  |
| Agua Caliente Spa Hotel                   | 47                  |

Source: Riverside County Economic Profile for Desert Hot Springs, 1998, Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc.

### Construction Valuation Trends

Since 1987, residential construction trends and valuations have varied widely, ranging from a high during this period of \$22.2 million in 1990, which also represents the beginning the latest recession, to a low of \$830,000 in 1999. While the first few years of the 1990s were stable, the last three years have seen steady decline in new residential development and associated valuations. While single family homes have made up the lion's share of new housing during this period, prior to 1992 the City realized a greater number of multi-family unit development, primarily in the affordable range. Over the 1987 to 1996 ten year period, almost \$124 million in new homes were constructed. Most development in the City, whether subsidized or market rate, is generally considered "affordable" in comparison to Coachella Valley, County or State housing costs.

**Chart: III-4**  
**Construction Valuations: Residential and Non-Residential 1990 Thru 1996 (Million)**



Source: Building Activity Reports, City of Desert Hot Springs Community Development Department, September 1990-96. Numbers do not reflect residential additions or alterations, which were very minor contributors to overall growth.

Non-residential construction during the past ten years has been a more modest contributor to overall development in the City. During this period, non-residential development in the City totaled about \$11.75 million, with the best year being 1992 when the City realized a total of \$5.35 million in non-residential construction. As can be seen from the comparison of these two measures of development, residential development spending outpaced non-residential development over the last ten years.

While the City has seen steady growth in the residential sector, it has not seen commensurate growth in either the industrial or commercial sectors. This pattern is consistent with the City's role heretofore as a bedroom community providing housing for a population employed elsewhere. These patterns are further discussed below.

### COMMERCIAL TRENDS

Commercial development is an important component of any community, providing goods and services to residents and other businesses from convenient locations and competitive prices. A healthy commercial economy and associated sales tax revenues are also an important source of revenue for local government. Finally, commercial and industrial development are an important source of employment, which tends to be found outside the community, as discussed below.



Desert Hot Springs should be filling the role as the commercial center for the upper Coachella Valley, especially that area defined by Painted Hills to the west and Sky Valley to the east, with a regional population of about 25,000. The area is linked to Interstate 10 and Highway 62, and could benefit from Valley visitors and highway travelers if commercial services were available along these major roadways. The most prevalent commercial uses in the community include general merchandise and retail, transient hotel services, and a wide variety of automobile service facilities, which play a major role in the economics of the community.

Currently (2000), the commercial core of the community is centered along the Palm Drive corridor, and includes two neighborhood centers and one community shopping center anchored by K-Mart. Other commercial development, especially hotel and motel uses, are also located in the eastern quadrant of the City's core. Major resort facilities include the Two Bunch Palms and Mirage Springs Resorts.

Important opportunities have been established along the Highway 62 corridor with the approval and annexation of the Rancho Royale project area, which straddles this highway. Planned commercial development includes general, neighborhood, community and regional shopping facilities, which will service tourists, highway travelers and local resident needs. Other major approved projects with important commercial components include the Cornerstone and Olympus Specific Plans. However, these are long-term assets that may not provide meaningful economic growth for several years. In the meantime, the City must look to effective, if incremental, ways of building the economic base and enhancing the City's revenue stream.

### City-Based Sales Potential

The 1995 aggregate and per capita sales potential for permanent residents of Desert Hot Springs are provided in the table below. This analysis takes into account such factors as average household size and income, costs of housing, and verified comparative purchasing patterns. The table illustrates that the largest existing expenditure categories are grocery stores, restaurants and automotive (fuel and oil) stores. The table also breaks down the per

capita sales potential in relation to the various types of stores within the City, with individual residents spending up to \$1,230 per year on groceries, and \$745 at restaurants.

**Table III-35  
1995 Annual Expenditure Estimate  
for Desert Hot Springs Residents**

| Store Type          | Aggregate \$       | Per Capita \$     |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Variety Stores      | 488,000            | 34.89             |
| Grocery Stores      | 18,190,000         | 1,230.28          |
| Auto (Fuels,etc)    | 8,570,000          | 579.32            |
| Apparel Stores      | 7,990,000          | 539.54            |
| Jewelry Stores      | 1,200,000          | 80.89             |
| Furniture,Related   | 4,630,000          | 312.96            |
| Appliance Stores    | 1,090,000          | 73.47             |
| Electronics         | 2,250,000          | 152.49            |
| Restaurants         | 11,020,000         | 745.17            |
| Drugs/Med.Equip.    | 1,960,000          | 132.34            |
| Personal Care       | 2,650,000          | 179.20            |
| Alcoholic Beverages | 1,441,000          | 95.62             |
| Tobacco             | 1,490,000          | 100.58            |
| Hardware/Garden     | 3,620,000          | 244.88            |
| Entertainment       | 1,440,000          | 97.36             |
| Miscellaneous       | 5,230,000          | 353.30            |
| <b>1995 Total</b>   | <b>\$73,258,00</b> | <b>\$4,952.39</b> |

Source: Urban Decision Systems, Inc.; Area Profile 1996 for the Desert Hot Springs City Limits, Area Summary, California Department of Finance and Terra Nova Planning & Research, Inc.

For 1995, the total sales potential of City residents was estimated at \$73,258,000. The 1995 population of 14,787 persons at that time can be applied to these per capita calculations to approximate the annual per capita sales potential for the year, which is estimated at \$4,952.29. However, actual per capita sales total only \$3,383.58, and total taxable sales within the City were only \$50,033,000. The difference of \$23,225,000 represents the approximate



retail sales potential of City residents not being spent within the city limits. This figure represents a major loss of revenue for local businesses as well as the City. While not all sales listed are taxable, if the resident spending lost to surrounding communities were taxable and was captured by the City, it would add about \$232,250 annually to the City General Fund.

### Taxable Sales and Sales Tax Revenues

Taxable sales data for the City is available and was reviewed for the period 1985 through 1995, to compare with the sales potential discussed above. These taxable sales figures, provided in the table below, indicate a steady if modest increase over this period, with some stagnation and one period (1994) of decreased taxable sales. Also, over this period taxable retail activity did not keep pace with City population, which based on 1985 population and sales ratios, should have generated total taxable sales of about \$54,401,000 in 1995. In 1986, approximately 208 taxable sales generators/outlets existed in the City. By 1990 this number had increased to 305, and in 1994 to approximately 342.

The bottom line is that about one-third of the City retail spending capacity is being lost to other communities. This has been clear for some time and is attributable to several factors. First, the majority of the City's labor force works outside the City (see below), which provides many opportunities for shopping while traveling to and from work. The City also lacks a full range of retail outlets or has smaller outlets that find it hard to compete with larger chain stores located elsewhere. K-Mart is currently one exception to this pattern. Neither does the City have malls or other large clusterings of retail that would enhance retail synergies within the City. While the core commercial area of Palm Drive is planned for this type of synergistic and complementary type of retailing, physical and financial constraints have limited City efforts.

**Table III-36  
Taxable Sales for  
Desert Hot Springs  
1985 Through 1995**

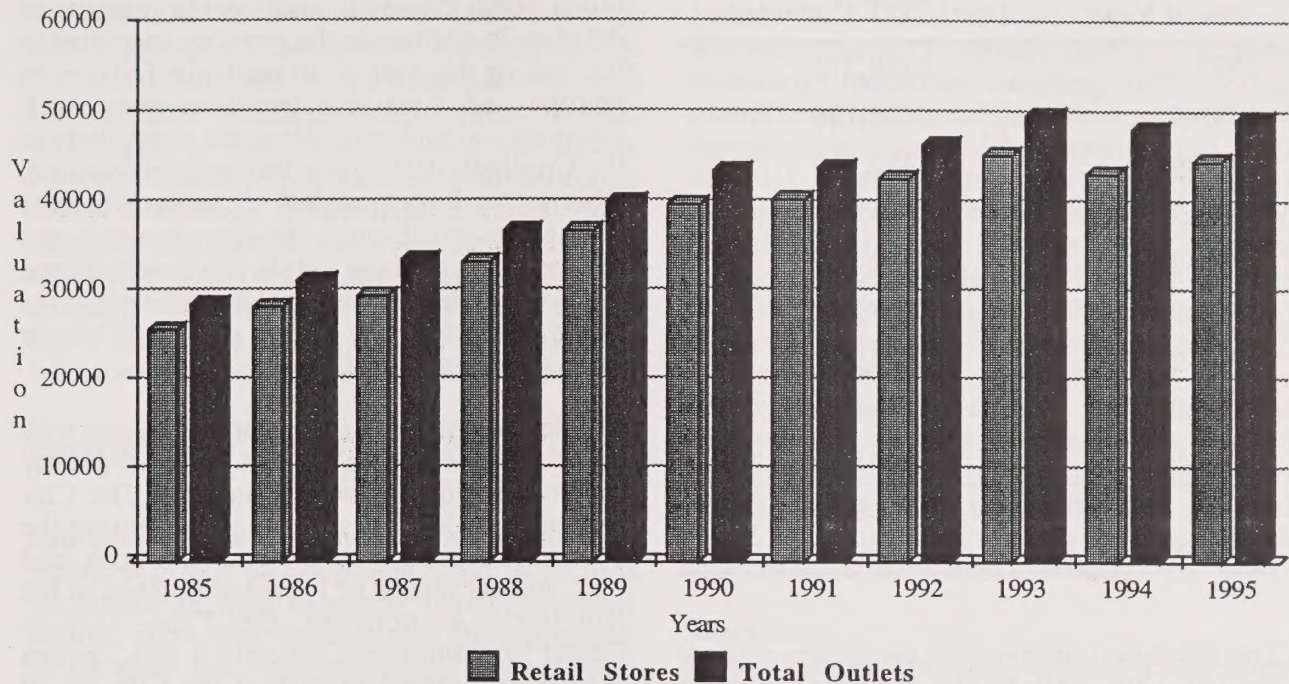
| Year | Retail Stores<br>(\$000) | Total Outlets<br>(\$000) |
|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1985 | 26,102                   | 29,070                   |
| 1986 | 28,757                   | 31,868                   |
| 1987 | 30,085                   | 34,082                   |
| 1988 | 33,707                   | 37,364                   |
| 1989 | 37,476                   | 40,584                   |
| 1990 | 40,192                   | 44,183                   |
| 1991 | 40,848                   | 44,390                   |
| 1992 | 43,236                   | 46,919                   |
| 1993 | 45,762                   | 50,228                   |
| 1994 | 43,840                   | 48,924                   |
| 1995 | 45,164                   | 50,033                   |

Source: California State Board of Equalization  
Taxable Sales in California (Sales and Use Tax),  
1985-1996

Taxable sales in the City for 1998, the last year that full year data is available, show that the 280 locations collecting sales tax generated a total of \$52,998,000 in taxable retail sales.



**Chart: III-5**  
**Taxable Sales for Desert Hot Springs**  
**1985 Through 1995**



Source: The California State Board of Equalization Taxable Sales in California (Sales and Use Tax), 1996

The City has the potential to broaden and solidify its role as the commercial center for a growing and diversifying region. However, it is clear that all components of the local market must also be grown to establish critical levels of commercial activity that will attract larger retail outlets and developments. The City currently (2000) offers a basic combination of retail stores. It is also faced with a broad range of commercial and industrial opportunities, that can be exploited in concert with its unique character and resort residential potential. The City's potential is, therefore, dependent upon the development and cultivation of the full range of economic activities, including residential and industrial, which can provide the basis for far stronger economic growth than can currently be realized by continued population growth only.

### **Tourism and Traveler Revenues**

The Desert Hot Springs economy is supported and strengthened by tourism, which has generated a steady increase in transient occupancy (bed) tax and also contributes to a wide range of retail sales. The City's hot mineral waters provided the initial impetus for hotel and resort development in the City, and have continued to be an identifying characteristic of the community. The City's hotels range from the modest family-run facility to the world-class Two Bunch Palms Resort, representing a very wide market potential to be exploited. The City is uniquely positioned to cultivate these resources for enhanced economic development. Currently the City has 970 hotel rooms, which have generated the following revenue trend shown in the table below.



**Table III-37**  
**Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)**  
**Desert Hot Springs**

| <b>Fiscal Year</b> | <b>Total TOT Collected</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1987-88            | \$368,272                  |
| 1991-92            | \$471,186                  |
| 1992-93            | \$382,114                  |
| 1993-94            | \$451,682                  |
| 1994-95            | \$492,587                  |
| 1995-96            | \$548,235                  |
| 1996-97            | \$533,758                  |
| 1997-98            | \$597,620                  |
| 1998-99            | \$600,000                  |

Source: City of Desert Hot Springs Annual Budgets and Finance Department.

Traveler-based revenues are nearly non-existent for the City, due to the distance between regional roadways and the City's commercial district. The City's lack of highway-serving commercial development either along Interstate-10 or Highway 62 should be a priority of any future economic development strategy. A similar focus should also be applied to the Indian Avenue corridor. The City may consider a more aggressive approach in facilitating development of highway-serving commercial along Highway 62.

While plans have been approved for major development along Highway 62, the City has been unable to extend its incorporated boundaries south to the interstate. Major annexation efforts along the Palm Drive corridor have met with substantial resistance. However, other opportunities that may be more successful include the expansion of the city limits to the northeast corner of Interstate-10 and Indian Avenue, which is in the City Sphere-of-Influence. An aggressive and well-orchestrated annexation effort in this direction could yield important short-term and long-term benefits from accessing this substantial drive-by market. This area also includes a substantial nucleus of industrial development that could be cultivated and expanded.

## **Hotel/Motel Trends**

While the City is well known for its hot mineral waters and unique desert environment, there are much larger domestic and foreign markets to develop. In addition to the growing appreciation for "taking the waters" in the United States, in Europe and Asia this tradition goes back centuries and millennia. No other community in the Coachella Valley has this unique resource, which can be expanded through effective marketing and through the development and redevelopment of the City's spa hotels. Some of the City's hotels are obsolete and several are being converted into senior care and "single room occupancy" facilities.

The development of new spa hotel facilities with all of the amenities expected today in quality resorts should also be encouraged. The City has made major investments in promoting the hot mineral water resource and its origins, and these efforts should be joined with those of the Hotelier's Association, the Palm Springs Desert Communities Convention and Visitors Bureau and others to market the City on all fronts.

## **Open Space: A Valuable Economic Resource**

In the past decade, natural resources and open space lands have become increasingly important attractions for the traveling and vacationing public. The expanded interest in eco-tourism provides an important opportunity for the City. The community has a unique potential, due to its location, to promote itself as the "Entrance to the Coachella Valley" and now, with the Long Canyon Trailhead, to also cultivate an image as a "Gateway to the Joshua Tree National Park".

The City and the immediate vicinity also have other important and marketable natural resource areas, including the Morongo Canyon Preserve, the BLM's Devil's Garden, County Ecological Preserve, Willow Hole Preserve, the Coachella Valley Preserve and other unique natural resource areas. This emerging market may offer important opportunities to the City, and complement the character and values of the community.



## **Tourism and Gaming Opportunities**

A variety of new and emerging trends in tourism may provide important opportunities for economic development. In addition to the growing interest in hot mineral spas and holistic therapies, there has been a tremendous growth in legalized gaming. While most of this development has taken place on Indian Reservations and in Nevada, several California cities, including Desert Hot Springs, have enacted ordinances to permit gaming. The City should pro-actively encourage the use of existing and appropriate future permits that allow the City to exploit this market, consistent with the community's values and character.

## **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Industrial Park Development Criteria**

Industrial park development criteria include economic as well as social needs. Physical factors, including location and environmental constraints and opportunities, are essential parameters. So, too, are the social, technological, and community design standards supportable by industry. Commodity and resource issues, including the availability of an appropriate labor force, water and the cost of energy, are also important measures of site suitability.

Industrial developers generally rely on the following factors: materials, labor, market, transportation, energy, and public policy. Added to these should be the less concrete notion of an attractive location, quality design and community context, important intangibles by which location decisions are also made. Each of these considerations is briefly discussed below.

### **Materials**

The relative importance of the availability of manufacturing materials varies greatly from one industry to the next. Instances where low value/high volume commodities are essential, and the high markup associated with transporting commodities may adversely affect the cost-competitiveness of the operation. Hence the close physical relationship between agricultural industries and the commodities that support them. In contrast, many manufacturing processes relying on large volumes of feed stock deliverable in equally high volumes, such as polymer resins, and the high value added

through processing or manufacturing make materials availability less critical to siting decisions.

### **Labor**

The labor needs of industry vary greatly. High technology industries, including computer chip manufacturing, machine tool operations, chemical/bio-chemical/bio-medical and other complex industrial processes typically require highly skilled labor. However, associated industries, such as electronics or medical technology assembly may be able to take advantage of semi-skilled labor. In contrast, many other operations can either make do with a less sophisticated labor force or rely on greatly automated operations. Automation has been pervading most industries and has resulted in greatly increased per capita production. A sufficiently large and reasonably well educated labor force may allow industry to train and develop skills that meet its needs.

### **Markets**

Markets range from the business or consumer next door, to those located in Europe or Asia. Industries that support local or regional markets may have a competitive advantage being located within or adjacent to these markets. For instance, supermarket warehousing/distribution operations are typically located close-in to their markets, while high value high-technology operations can be located anywhere, other operational constraints permitting.

Generally, the more widely distributed an industry's market, the less critical is that operation's location, assuming transportation criteria are otherwise satisfied. If manufacturers support other industrial operations, for instance box, bottle or plastic container manufacturers supporting consumer product companies, their ability to cost-competitively provide these support services may require their location close to their primary customers.

### **Transportation**

The ability to cost-effectively transport raw or manufacturing materials, as well as finished product, is an essential part of market competitiveness. An integral part of this criteria is the interstate highway system, and access to land or air shipping facilities. Potentially important in this regard is access to air cargo facilities at regional, national, and international airports. Industry-serving "airparks" cater to



firms producing small-sized, light-weight and high value products that can be cost-effectively shipped by air. Many high technology industries are effectively served by locations at or near airports.

### **Energy/Utilities**

In the past two decades, energy and utility costs have become an increasingly important factor in industry cost-competitiveness. Many industries generate large electricity and natural gas demands. As costs of energy have risen since the oil embargo of the early 1970s, industry has shifted much of its manufacturing capacity to the sunbelt where energy costs and annual heating/cooling loads are less. These regional differentials have somewhat evened out. Nonetheless, even within a limited area, the cost of some energy resources can vary substantially with suppliers having monopolies (districts) within close proximity. In the present case, the seasonally high cooling loads and the varying demand for different types of energy will impact the cost-competitiveness of industries differently. Water resources and wastewater treatment facilities are also important to industrial operations in varying degrees. Currently (1997), the City industrial park lack sewers and natural gas.

### **Public Policy**

Social factors are sometimes overlooked as a consideration or criteria in siting industrial operations. However, the social or community makeup can enhance or deter industrial development, depending on the social goals of the community. These goals are made manifest in the community's social, land use, and economic development policies, which may value selected integration of industrial development, or constitute a total opposition to industry in general. It is clear that master planned industrial parks fare far better and perform as a more smoothly integrated part of the urban land use pattern. A more simple and less controlled land use assignment approach can lead to inefficient use of industrial lands and increase the potential for significant land use incompatibilities.

### **Location and Development Context**

In addition to the more pragmatic location considerations discussed above, more and more important is the desire to locate operations in a well designed and well located industrial park. Prominent sites with attractive entries,

landscaping, and thoughtfully designed buildings, which can be seen by the traveling public, constitute an important form of free advertising. More industrial interests are concerned with projecting a high profile, progressive and forward thinking public image. As nothing succeeds like success, well conceived and aesthetically designed parks attract quality users initially and set a standard for other users to emulate.

### **Industrial Market: Inland Empire Regional Summary**

In recent years, the Inland Empire region has continued to see strength, especially when compared to other Southern California markets, with a reduction in vacancy of industrial space. After five years in the doldrums, healthy demand has been keeping lease rates for the largest facilities quite strong. More than two million square feet of industrial space was under construction in the region in 1995, with many facilities in the 100,000 square foot range and larger. The area of highest activity was focused around the Ontario Airport. The addition of nearly 13,000 jobs in 1995, a 1.6% increase, has made the Inland Empire a leader in the region's return to growth.

The region is expected to see a population increase of 440,000 in the 1995-2000 timeframe and this growth is expected to continue to create a favorable labor market and to fuel continued industrial development. Warehousing and distribution uses are expected to continue to dominate demand for space, exploiting the substantial transportation nexus of air cargo, rail, and trucking routes. Adaptive re-use of military facilities at Norton and March Air Force Bases are also expected to bolster this market and make it attractive for additional advantageous and cost-effective industrial development.

The Inland Empire region is still considered the low cost housing alternative in Southern California, and the local economy is largely consumer-driven. The trend is continuing to be upbeat, and double-digit percentage increases in absorption of industrial space are expected to drive lease and sale prices upward through the rest of the decade.



## **Coachella Valley Industrial Park Development**

Industrial park development in the Coachella Valley is more of a mixed affair, with the exception of the agri-business sector dominating the rail sidings and nearby lands in Indio and Coachella. Even in these instances, there is only limited use of rail service in these areas. A lumber wholesaler also receives shipments via rail.

Results of a 1995 survey, while not comprehensive, provide an additional perspective of the state of the industrial real estate market in the Coachella Valley. A total of 581 business establishments were identified and recorded within industrial parks from Palm Springs to Coachella. The survey indicates that service industries (insurance, realtors, tax/financial advisors, etc.) comprise more than one-third (37%) of the users, with contractors and construction companies comprising about 20%, and being a distant second. These are followed by automotive repair/parts with 12% and the balance of users comprising less than 5% each.

It is clear that the non-agricultural portion of the Coachella Valley industrial real estate reflects the general services/business district character of the region. Non-agricultural industrial development is highly dependent upon construction and service users and less on manufacturing serving a regional, national or international market.

## **City Industrial Development**

Industrial development brings stable and generally higher paying jobs to a community, and can induce development in a variety of secondary or support industries. To date, industrial development has been quite limited and has failed to exploit the many advantages that industrial lands in the City provide. Land costs are low and are available in lot sizes ranging from a few to many acres. Industrial lands are well serviced with infrastructure and are located along major arterial roadways, have convenient access to major regional transportation links, and are the closest Coachella Valley industrial sites to the San Bernardino/Riverside and Los Angeles markets.

Regional industrial markets that may be attracted to City industrial sites include wind turbine and electrical power equipment, medical supplies and technologies, as well as solar power and other alternative energy manufacturers. A wide range of associated businesses, including machining, plastic fabrication, component assembly and other support industries may also be attracted to these sites.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City must implement goals and policies which are designed to balance the ratio of housing to jobs, to promote economic activities in both commercial and industrial sectors, and to encourage the balanced and managed growth of the community.

The City of Desert Hot Springs Redevelopment Agency and established redevelopment project areas must be one area of focused utilization. The funds allocated for redevelopment activities within these designated areas can be used for tax increment financing, lot consolidation, participation in development and off-site improvements, and other forms of financial and regulatory assistance to further economic development goals. The development projects of the Redevelopment Agency will help revitalize blighted areas, and promote the City's important economic resources.

The implementation of the goals of this Element can also take place through adherence to the Land Use Element, which balances land uses, avoids incompatibilities and assures that land divisions result in optimal lot sizes for residential, commercial and industrial development. The Element is also implemented through the City Zoning Ordinance, which should assure that development is complementary with the goals and policies of the Economic Development Element.

## **Economic Development Strategy**

Essential programs of this element describe the preparation and implementation of an Economic Development Program. This strategy and implementation plan must respond to the many new economic imperatives that face the City of Desert Hot Springs. With the national recession, the City's economy has generally



slowed over the past few years, yet the regional economy has generally continued to grow. The broader economic environment in the Coachella Valley continues to evolve and may further limit the near and long-term economic development options available to Desert Hot Springs.

Economic development opportunities are driven by an inherent logic based on an understanding of market conditions, trends, costs of land and infrastructure, physical information on development areas, and incentive programs available to business prospects. Exploiting opportunities requires an ability to effectively communicate the advantageous market conditions and the ability and willingness of the City to facilitate development.

The City of Desert Hot Springs, with a viable Redevelopment Agency and reputation as a mineral spa resort and residential community, is committed to revitalizing and redeveloping its downtown business district, which focuses on the Palm Drive corridor. The City has also recently (1992) annexed economically important lands and has the opportunity to broaden its economic base in a focused, targeted and effective manner.

### **General Strategy**

The economic development program and strategies must leverage the resources and capabilities of the City and act to coordinate and integrate staff of City departments, the Chamber of Commerce, Hoteliers Association and other parties of interest. The strategy must be based on a detailed work program of quantified objectives, and allocate resources that maximize concrete results. Programmed in a somewhat linear or sequential manner, the strategy should not preclude and can actually facilitate taking advantage of economic development opportunities that arise in the near-term.

The market and development needs of each business sector should be defined, and programs that specifically address each market sector's needs prepared and implemented. Market segment analysis should incorporate local business/customer/resident experience and perspective into the process and lend local insight and expertise to the marketing effort.

In order to pursue this strategy, a variety of resources must be developed and analysed to identify prospects in each target market. These

include tapping the expansion potential of local service, retail and restaurant businesses, and those based in California and the west. Various business and economic development networks should also be exploited, ranging from county and state resources and agencies, to prospects identified through national industry and business associations. Research taking advantage of governmental and private sector computer databases will also uncover a great number of business and development prospects in all target segments.

### **Advance Technology: The City Web Page**

The City's Web site is one of the most important and cost-effective tools available for interested parties to access information on the community and its economic development efforts. Internet and WEB technologies are now easy to use and offer an inexpensive and rapidly growing communications channel for City marketing and economic development. The Web page can include color photos or video clips of resorts, parks and residential subdivisions, mountains and other City resources and amenities.

The Web page should also "hot link" the viewer to other Web pages, such as those established by City hotels and other businesses and information services. Within a short period of time, many of even the smaller businesses will have Web pages that can be "hot-linked" with the City's "Home Page". The Web page should also be used by the City to allow prospective land and business developers to peruse demographic data on the City and the region, or review maps of privately or City-assembled lands available for negotiation and development.

### **Retail Trade Focus**

An essential measure of the community's economic health is its taxable sales potential and the percentage of that potential captured by the City. Further development of the economic development strategy should include focused research in retail trade, as well as assessment of the professional office, institutional, and industrial components of the local economy.

As a better understanding of local conditions and opportunities develops, the next step will involve an analysis of the City's vacant and under-utilized properties. This should include lots to be mapped within the Redevelopment



Project Areas, and lot consolidation concepts complementing potential marketing opportunities. Lotting patterns and development planning in the City's industrial area should also be assessed.

Development opportunities and constraints must be identified and addressed. Property profiles should be prepared, utilizing readily available mapping and other graphic resources, along with land use and other regulatory conditions. Incentive programs and strategies, marketing information/publication and distribution, business assistance services, and strategic planning should also be established. Occasional public/Agency workshops should follow the consolidated strategic planning document that is ready to guide implementation.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

A broadly based, healthy and balanced economy that provides a full range of economic and employment opportunities.

### **GOAL 2**

Continued growth which assures the maintenance of a revenue base adequate to support present and future public services and facilities needs.

#### **Policy 1**

Establish and maintain the City's role as an important commercial center serving the Desert Hot Springs area and the upper Coachella Valley.

#### **Program 1 A**

Prepare and implement a detailed economic development program that includes strategies to promote multi-pronged commercial expansion, and which markets to residents of surrounding communities, and also services the vacationing tourist and traveling public.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

Actively solicit employment and revenue generating development, including resort, commercial and industrial projects compatible and consistent with the City's General Plan.

#### **Program 2 A**

Utilizing the City Economic Development Program, development and implement strategies which actively promote and facilitate resort, commercial and industrial developments and revitalization projects that generate employment opportunities and contribute to City General Fund revenues.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

Encourage and facilitate the development of the tourist/traveler commercial potential of the U.S. Interstate-10, State Highway 62 and Indian Avenue corridors, the California Desert Conservation Area, Joshua Tree National Park and the Greater Coachella Valley area.

#### **Program 3 A**

Establish and implement strategies that gain and/or expand City access to the I-10 and Highway 62 corridors, and actively promote development of functionally planned and attractive commercial service facilities to capture a share of these drive-by markets.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.



### **Program 3 B**

Actively coordinate and cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce, Hoteliers Association, and appropriate county, state and federal agencies in promoting City-based access to the Joshua Tree National Park, Morongo Canyon Preserve and Desert Hot Springs desert resources as destination recreation areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Chamber of Commerce; Hoteliers Association; Riverside County; State Resources Agency; U.S. Department of the Interior

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 4**

Encourage and promote protection and conservation of domestic water resources and stable and orderly growth in permanent and seasonal households within the community.

### **Program 4 A**

Coordinate with the Mission Springs Water District, Desert Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District to maximize the availability of safe and plentiful domestic water resources, as well as sewage collection and treatment, to allow for continued economic development.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; MSWD, CVWD, DWA

**Schedule:** Immediate; Annual review.

### **Policy 5**

Assure sufficient infrastructure and capital facilities in order to maintain existing economic activities and attract new resort, commercial businesses and industries to the City.

### **Program 5 A**

Plan and coordinate the provision of major infrastructure through the development/updating and implementation of master capital facilities plans that address and enhance resort, commercial and industrial development needs.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; MSWD; CVWD; Community Development Department; CalTrans; County Flood Control;

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 5 B**

All development interests, including residential, resort, commercial and industrial project proponents, shall be responsible for their fair share of on-site and off-site improvements required to support the development proposal. Improvements required may include, but are not limited to, street construction and signalization, utility extensions, drainage facilities, parks and other facilities.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

### **Program 5 C**

Cooperate with CalTrans to maximize the efficient use of roadway and interchange capacity on State Highways 62 and U.S. Interstate-10.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

Preserve and enhance the community's marketable and unique qualities through thoughtful redevelopment and control of new development, protecting and enhancing the desert character of the community.

### **Program 6 A**

Encourage the maintenance and/or rehabilitation of older residential and commercial neighborhoods to enhance the quality of neighborhood character and the general quality of life and level of commercial service in the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency; Community Development Department; City Council

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 6 B**

Prepare a Master Plan for the redevelopment of Pierson Boulevard and Palm Drive which focusses on the preservation and enhancement of this important central business district, the analysis of existing and future residential land uses within the commercial designation, and the creation of a strategy for economic revitalization for the area.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency  
**Schedule:** 2001-2002



## **Policy 7**

Adopt and implement plans and development guidelines, which encourage and enhance quality development and renovation in the downtown area, and along the Highway 62 and Interstate-10 corridors.

### **Program 7 A**

Actively pursue and, where appropriate, participate in the development of commercial and industrial projects which take advantage of existing major roadways, including but not limited to Palm Drive, State Highways 62 and Interstate-10.

**Responsible Agency:** Redevelopment Agency; Community Development Department; Public Works Department; City Council  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 7 B**

Encourage new commercial development in the downtown area to also explore and consider the incorporation of residential units.

**Responsible Agencies:** Community Development Department; Re-Development Agency; City Council; Planning Commission.  
**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

### **Program 7 C**

Assure development and implementation of Specific Plans that maximize the efficient use of vacant and partially developed commercial lands and assure development of a mix of complimentary land uses.

**Responsible Agency:** City Redevelopment Agency; Community Development Department; City Council; Private Developers  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 7 D**

Develop and implement a Community Design Element and Zoning Ordinance, which establish development codes, standards and guidelines that provide adequate flexibility while assuring quality planning and design in all development, consistent with the City's valued desert environment.

**Responsible Agency:** City Redevelopment Agency; Community Development Department; City Council  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

## **Policy 8**

Develop and utilize a comprehensive community economic profile, which clearly states the City's conditions and establishes

goals for future levels of development and economic activity.

### **Program 8 A**

As an integral part of the Economic Development Program, prepare a community economic profile which shall be used to pro-actively promote all types of development that will enhance the City's existing desert character and support economic growth and employment opportunities within the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Redevelopment Agency; City Council; Chamber of Commerce  
**Schedule:** 2000-2001; Continuous.

## **Policy 9**

Work to promote net annual increases in local household incomes for all socio-economic sectors of the community.

### **Program 9 A**

Through all applicable policies and programs, the City shall pro-actively promote improved employment opportunities for all socio-economic sectors, and especially lower-income households within the community, to increase average household and discretionary incomes.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County Economic development Agency; California Economic Development Department; Redevelopment Agency; Chamber of Commerce  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

## **Policy 11**

Make every effort to expedite the processing of development proposals which address the economic development goals of the community and take the initiative to incubate new programs and projects.

### **Program 11 A**

Streamline and expedite the development review process through concurrent processing of applications and facilitating parallel tracking design review and the building permit process without sacrificing quality development.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Redevelopment Agency; City Council  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.



## **Policy 12**

Encourage and promote special events, activities and uses which strengthen and promote the City's image, prestige and attractiveness as a resort and tourist/visitor destination.

### **Program 12 A**

Promote unique or special events/uses/activities which will enhance the area's image as a tourist resort and desert recreation area, which may include appropriately located trailheads to parks and open space areas, RV parks, fairgrounds, BLM campgrounds, Jeep Tours, Equestrian Centers and Iron Eyes Cody Days and similar planned events and uses.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Chamber of Commerce

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

## **Policy 13**

The City shall promote and/or develop programs which enhance the City's new role as a "Gateway to Joshua Tree National Park" and other open space resource areas, and encourage the expansion of associated tourist/traveler revenues.

### **Program 13 A**

Coordinate with National Park Service staff, Chamber of Commerce, BLM, The Nature Conservancy and other appropriate entities to develop and promote events which will attract tourists to such City open space resources the Morongo Preserve and the Park for hiking, camping, horseback riding and to appropriate annual festivals and other activities.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Chamber of Commerce; National Park staff; BLM; The Nature Conservancy

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 13 B**

Pro-actively plan, consult and cooperate with National Park Service and BLM staff to promote Long Canyon as a major entry-way to Joshua Tree National Park.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Chamber of Commerce; National Park Service; BLM

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.



# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

This chapter of the General Plan discusses the environmental resources of the City and surrounding areas. The elements addressed in this chapter include Biological Resources, Archaeological and Historic Resources, Water Resources, Air Quality, Open Space and Conservation, and Energy and Mineral Resources. The City of Desert Hot Springs has substantial environmental resources which contribute to the quality of life for City residents and attract a significant tourist trade. This chapter addresses the importance of and need for conservation of these valued resources.







# BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Biological Resources Element is to identify the important and valuable biological resources occurring within Desert Hot Springs and surrounding area. The Element establishes goals, policies and programs to utilize and conserve these resources for the benefit of the entire community. The Element is intended to provide a basis for understanding biological resource issues, references other sources of information that guide decision makers in regulating land use and development, while protecting these critical community resources.

## BACKGROUND

Several other elements of the General Plan have a direct or indirect relationship to the Biological Resources Element, including the Land Use Element, Open Space and Conservation Element and the Community Design Element. It is also related to Arts and Culture and Parks and Recreation Elements, reflecting the community's enjoyment of and commitment to its wildlife resources. Local biological resources, and the desert environment generally, have also proven important market assets for Desert Hot Springs, which has adopted the desert environment as a central community theme. In this regard, the Biological Resources Element may influence and contribute to the effective implementation of conservation, community design and economic development goals, policies and programs.

Cities and counties in California are required by Government Code Section 65302 (d) to include an element that addresses the conservation or preservation of wildlife resources in their General Plan. State law also requires that the element and supporting documentation provide inventories of natural vegetation, fish and wildlife and their habitat, including rare and endangered species. Consistent with requirements, this element includes goals, policies and programs, as well as plans and resource maps showing areas important to the preservation of plant and animal life, including

habitat for fish and wildlife species, and areas required for ecological and scientific study purposes. Programs which act to assure the preservation of biological resources are also included.

The Desert Hot Springs city limits and Sphere-of-Influence (SOI) encompass lands located near the western end of the Salton Trough, a fault-controlled valley basin with expansive and varying geography and habitats, and the complexity of various transition zones, which make the region a rich resource area. The city limits and SOI include lands owned and/or managed by the City, state and federal agencies. The community and the vicinity comprise one of the most biologically unique and diverse regions in the country.

The San Jacinto, San Bernardino and Santa Rosa Mountains effectively isolate the greater Coachella Valley region from the moderating coastal influences to the west. As a result, the City is located in one of the hottest and driest parts of the country. Distinguished by its elevation on major alluvial plains of the Little San Bernardino and San Bernardino Mountains, the City enjoys mild winters and extreme aridity; only Death Valley is subject to more extreme conditions. Desert Hot Springs is located at the northwestern extension of the Salton Trough and the Colorado sub-unit of the Sonoran Desert.

The desert floor supports sparse vegetation limited by heat and aridity. However, the climate of the City and region becomes milder with increasing elevation and supports more vegetation, including as many as nine species of cacti and a variety of woody plants such as palo verde and smoke tree, and many herbaceous plants. Canyons and springs support native fan palm communities and a wide variety of other plants and animals. The various habitat types supported in Desert Hot Springs and their importance are briefly discussed below.



In the City of Desert Hot Springs and surrounding lands, and within the context of the General Plan, the Biological Resource Element plays a pivotal role in defining the character of the community. The varied and unique geographic and geophysical conditions have created an environment for many diverse and occasionally highly specialized communities of plants and animals, occupying equally varied ecological niches.

## COMMUNITY WILDLIFE HABITATS

Biological resources do not occur in isolation, but are found in and are a part of a habitat, an ecological system or network of interrelationships between living things and their physical environment. Habitat values are controlled by tolerable climate, a varied terrain, adequate space, a dependable food and water supply, soils for healthy plant growth, and shelter and nesting sites. An animal may live across habitat lines to meet all of its needs. A total of 194 plant species have been positively identified in the planning area and their varying mix provide differing habitat for a wide range of birds, animals and insects.

### Sonoran Desert Creosote Community

#### Dune and Sand Field Habitat

The southern-most portion of the planning area comprises the edge of the valley floor, and generally extends from Interstate-10 northward to the vicinity of Dillon Road. This area is dominated by habitats comprised of shifting, windblown sand supporting sparse vegetation. The most common plant community found here in these desert dunes and sand fields is the Sonoran Desert creosote bush scrub, which includes creosote bush, burro bush, brittlebush and desert Brickellia. Three separate sub-communities comprise this community, including active but primarily stabilized and partially stabilized sand dunes, and stabilized and partially stabilized desert sand fields (south of Dillon Road).

These aeolian or blowsand habitats are critical to a number of special-status wildlife and plant species, including the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard, the flat-tailed horned lizard, flat-seeded spurge and the Coachella Valley milk vetch. Active desert dunes are areas of actively moving sand with little or no vegetation or

moisture, while stabilized and partially stabilized desert dunes retain more moisture just below the surface and support varying amounts of vegetation, ranging from scattered low-growing annuals and perennial grasses to evergreen and deciduous shrubs. Stabilized and partially stabilized sand fields are accumulations of desert sand not in a dune formation, where vegetation ranges widely from scattered herbs and shrubs to nearly enclosed canopy of shrubs such as dune mesquite. All of these communities are dependent upon active sand transport. This collection of communities has experienced limited impact from urbanization in the planning area.



#### Alluvial Plains Habitat

Nearly all of the Desert Hot Springs planning area consists of alluvial plain habitats occurring on flood-formed fans and bajadas, which extend from canyon mouths to the desert floor. In the planning area these habitats are formed by a variety of mountain drainages, including Long Canyon, Little and Big Morongo Canyons, Blind Canyon, Mission Creek and smaller canyons forming alluvial fans, terraces and washes. The surface and habitat conditions change on these plains with increasing distance downslope from canyon mouths.

Plants of the alluvial plain habitat are generally typical of the Colorado Desert and include upslope extensions of creosote bush joined by species of cacti and a variety of woody and herbaceous plants. The habitat's many species of annuals can make up more than half of the plain's flora. Cacti are one of the most striking of the plain's plants, ranging from flat-stemmed species such as of the beavertail to the stately California (fire) barrel cactus. Other cactus occurring here include Teddy-bear and diamond and golden cholla, hedgehog cactus,



and fishhook and nipple cacti. Shrubs and sub-shrubs in this community include brittlebush or encelia, burrobrush, apricot mallow, indigo bush, jojoba, New Mexico ditaxis and desert lavender. Larger woody shrubs also occurring here include the palo verde, Fremont cottonwood and desert willow.

### **Sandy Wash Habitat**

The extensive alluvial plain habitat of the planning area has been created by the extensive and largely uncontrolled drainages and sandy wash areas can support a richer array of plants and wildlife. As washes emerge from canyon mouths they cut a channel into the alluvial plain, which broadens and branches out into intertwined or braided washes. The largest desert washes in the planning area include Mission Creek which drains large areas of the San Bernardino Mountains, Big and Little Morongo Washes, and Long Canyon Wash. Limited channelization and control has been constructed in these and smaller drainage, which still harbor a variety of plants and wildlife. Many of these habitat areas are regularly disturbed and/or eliminated in the course of periodic channel maintenance and major storm events.

A wide variety of species occupy the sandy washes but only a limited number are consistently associated with this habitat, with trees and large shrubs accounting for many of the characteristic species. Palo verde, with its green trunk and branches, typically dominates desert wash habitat but is limited in the planning area. Cat-claw is also typical residents of the sandy wash habitat. Smoketree, a member of the pea family, is more common and has been encouraged in areas scoured by storm runoff. Honey mesquite and cat's claw are also common in these habitat. Common shrubs and sub-shrubs include chuparosa, cheesebush, sweetbush, desert lavender, dyeweed, New Mexico ditaxis, sandpaper plant and bladderpod. The absence of certain shallow rooted species, particularly cacti, is due to their easy removal by stormwaters and their slow growth rate and re-establishment.

### **Desert Fan Palm Oasis Woodland**

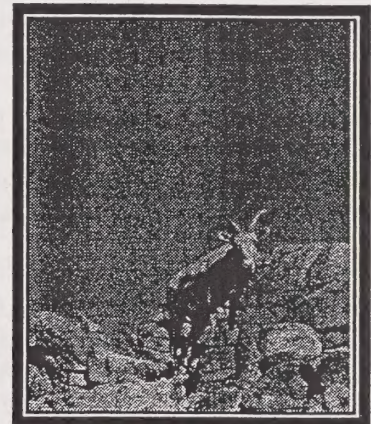
Limited but important examples of the desert fan palm oasis woodland are found in the City planning area. It is a plant community that has been given special status as one of the highest inventory priority by the California Department

of Fish and Game. In the Coachella Valley, the palm oasis woodland is characterized by open to dense groves of native desert fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) that can grow to more than 50 feet. Two impressive examples of this plant community occur within the Two Bunch Palms Resort and at the Seven Palms Valley Ranch. Other species expected to be found in association with the fan palm oasis include arrowweed, willows, rushes and mulefat.

A variety of wildlife are also frequently associated with the desert fan palm community, including the western yellow bat, common kingsnake, desert slender salamander, California treefrog, hooded oriel, Cooper's hawk, golden eagle, prairie falcon, Least Bell's vireo, common flicker, carpenter bee and the giant palm boring beetle. This large beetle is responsible for the majority of the damage to these woodlands.

### **Upland and Rocky Slopes Habitat**

Upland areas in the western portion of the planning area and rock slopes occurring within and near the planning area are associated with the elevated alluvial fans and foothills of the San Bernardino and Little San



Bernardino Mountains, which extend from the edge of alluvial plains to an elevation of about 800 meters.

The alluvian uplands are primarily composed of the Sonoran mixed wood and succulent scrub habitat community, which includes a substantial dominance of cacti and other stem succulents and by shrubs similar in aspect to Sonoran Creosote scrub. This community is found largely on rocky, well-drained slopes and alluvial fans usually between 300 and 1,200 meters. This habitat type has been identified on lands immediately east of Mission Lakes Country Club and on lands west of Highway 62 and generally north of Pierson Boulevard.



The rocky slope habitat is typified by unrelieved rock, weathered and fractured as exposed bedrock and ranging to broken and displaced material as loose debris of stone, pebbles and sand. While vegetation appears deceptively sparse, this habitat supports a large number of perennials and annual species. Plant size and densities increase with elevation and associated increases in annual rainfall.

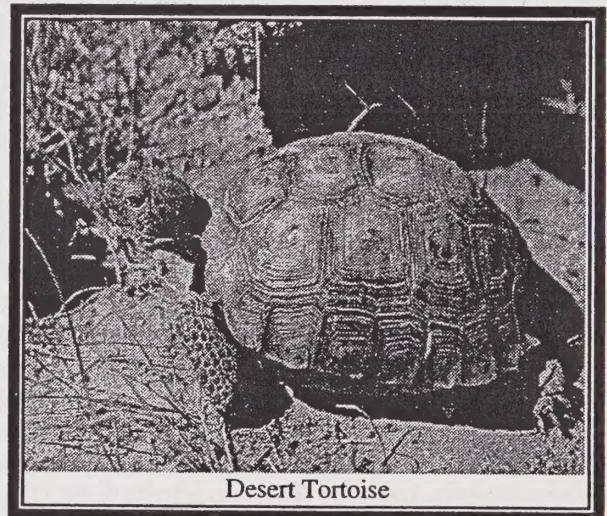
Common perennials include creosote bush, brittlebush, burrobush and agave. Agave is a particularly striking plant with a compact basal rosette of large succulent leaves that send up a single central flower-bearing stalk bearing yellow flowers and reaching a height of more than 20 feet. Flowers are produced only once in the plant's life, which dies soon after flowering. Ocotillo are also common in this habitat, as are spike moss, Parry's cloak fern, arrowleaf, pygmy cedar, bushy cryptantha, bedstraw, rush pea and crossosoma. The tall ocotillo is a special plant with a unique growth form with unusual branched stems topped by bright red flower bracts once and sometimes twice a year. Annuals may occur in an unevenly distributed pattern, with those of the greatest relative abundance including woolly plantain, crenulate phacelia, rock daisy and cryptantha. A wide variety of other annuals occur in unique and condition-specific areas within the rocky slope habitat.

#### **Willow Hole/Edom Hill ACEC**

The Willow Hole/Edom Hill Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is located immediately southeast of the City's Sphere-of-Influence (SOI) and is an important preserve for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard and other sensitive species. Its unique mix of habitat communities is created by a high groundwater table from diking caused by the San Andreas Fault, which is also responsible for the elevated terrain of Edom Hill and the Indio Hills. It is comprised of shifting sand dunes, mesquite thickets, palm oases and sand fields that provide important habitat for nesting and foraging birds, a variety of mammals, lizards and invertebrates. The City's southern SOI area is an upwind extension of the sand dunes and plains making up much of this habitat.

#### **Sensitive, Rare and Endangered Species**

The Desert Hot Springs General Plan study area is host to a wide variety of sensitive plant and animal species, some of which have been listed as threatened or endangered by the state and federal governments. Animals listed as "threatened" are those whose numbers have dropped to such low levels, and/or whose populations are so isolated that the continuation of the species could be jeopardized. "Endangered" species are those with such limited numbers or subject to extreme circumstances that the extinction is a real possibility. The following table lists some of the sensitive species known or likely to occur within the planning area.



Desert Tortoise





Table IV-11  
Desert Hot Springs Species of Special Concern

| Animal and Plant Species             | (Latin Name)                              | Status |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Animals</b>                       |                                           |        |
| Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard  | (Uma inornata)                            | FT/SE  |
| Desert tortoise                      | (Gopherus agassizii)                      | FT/ST  |
| Flat-tailed horned lizard            | (Phrynosoma mcallii)                      | ND     |
| Common chuckwalla                    | (Sauromalus obesus)                       | ND/ND  |
| Golden eagle                         | (Aquila/chrysaetos)                       | ND     |
| Prairie falcon                       | (Falco mexicanus)                         | ND     |
| Peregrine falcon                     | (Falco peregrinatus)                      | FE/SE  |
| Burrowing owl                        | (Speotyto cunicularia)                    | ND     |
| Southwestern willow flycatcher       | (Empidonax trailii extimus)               | FE/SE  |
| Least Bell's vireo                   | (Vireo bellii pusillus)                   | FE/SE  |
| California leaf-nosed bat            | (Macrotis californicus)                   | ND     |
| Spotted bat                          | (Euderma maculatum)                       | ND     |
| California mastiff bat               | (Eumops perotis californicus)             | ND     |
| Palm Springs ground squirrel         | (Spermophilus tereticaudus)               | ND     |
| Palm Springs little pocket mouse     | (Onychomys torridus ssp. ramona)          | ND/ND  |
| Peninsular bighorn sheep             | (Ovis canadensis cremnobates)             | FE/ST  |
| Coachella giant sand-treader cricket | (Macrobates valgum)                       | ND/ND  |
| Coachella Valley Jerusalem cricket   | (Stenopelmatus calhouni)                  | ND/ND  |
| Crissal thrasher                     | (Toxostoma crissale)                      | ND     |
| Le Conte's thrasher                  | (Toxostoma lecontei)                      | ND     |
| Yellow Warbler                       | (Dendroica petechia brewsteri)            | ND     |
| <b>Plants</b>                        |                                           |        |
| California ditaxis                   | (Ditaxis californica)                     | FC/ND  |
| Coachella Valley milk-vetch          | (Astragalus lentiginosus var. Coachellae) | FE/ND  |
| Triple-ribbed milk-vetch             | (Astragalus tricaratus)                   | FE/ND  |
| Little San Bernardino Mts Gilia      | (Gilia maculata)                          | FC/    |
| Desert fan palm oasis woodland       |                                           | ND /   |

**Status Definitions:**

FE: Federally listed as "Endangered"  
 FPE: Federally proposed or petitioned as "Endangered"  
 SE: State listed as "Endangered"  
 CSC: California Species of Special Concern  
 FC: Federal Candidate Species for Listing. Designation dropped in 1996 by the US Fish & Wildlife Service.  
 FT: Federally listed as "Threatened"  
 ST: State listed as "Threatened"  
 ND: Species not designated  
 FPS: Fully Protected Species

- Please see the General Plan EIR and Associated Biological Resource Assessment for a comprehensive listing of sensitive species and communities.



Both "rare" and "sensitive" species are those determined less sensitive to impacts to their numbers, and where perpetuation does not appear significantly threatened. The Biological Resources Sensitive Elements Map identifies sensitive plant communities and wildlife species known to occur within the City and study area.

### **Biological Resources in Urbanizing Areas**

From on-site and aerial photograph examination of the General Plan study area, it is evident that almost all urbanization clears the land. Whether one house on a large lot, a large subdivision or a master planned residential community, the native vegetation and its inherent wildlife habitat value are typically completely removed. Where landscaping has been introduced, exotic and other non-native plants may sometimes prevail. These not only have little or no habitat value for native animals and birds, but they can "escape" and compete with native plants for nutrients and water in the wild.

As a strategy to address this concern, the City should require that new development, whether public or private, utilize native trees and shrubs in landscape plans, including plants salvaged on-site, to the greatest extent practical. This may include encouraging the use of "link" course designs in new golf courses with non-play areas landscaped with native vegetation. The City should also prohibit the use of certain non-native and invasive plant species that compete with native vegetation (see Biological Technical Report in the General Plan Program EIR).

### **Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan**

The difficulty in protecting threatened or endangered species can be effectively addressed through the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP), and especially those that address the needs of more than one species or habitat. This approach has become the principle management strategy for protecting the long-term viability of sensitive biological resources. One of the first and most successful has been the HCP established for the Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard, which has become a prototype for similar efforts across the country.

The City and the other members of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) are preparing a multiple species HCP that will address a wide range of species and habitat protection issues for the region. Sensitive natural communities or habitats occurring in the planning area to be addressed in the HCP include sand dunes and sand fields, Sonoran creosote bush scrub and mixed woody and succulent scrub communities, and desert fan palm oasis woodlands. Approximately 31 plant and animal species are under consideration for protection through the multi-species HCP.

### **Regional Wildlife Corridor**

The Desert Hot Springs planning area offers important opportunities for the preservation of wildlife migration corridors. This is due to the size and pattern of major drainages, and the urban development pattern that has occurred in the past few decades. Major barriers to migration include urban core development in the City, as well as State Highway 62 and Interstate-10 construction. Several north-south wildlife corridors do exist and include the relatively pristine Little San Bernardino Mountains, and the Mission Creek, Little and Big Morongo and Long Canyon Washes. Cooperative efforts should be made with the Riverside County Flood Control District, which is responsible for managing the regional stormwater flows, to maximize the habitat and migration corridor value of this area.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City of Desert Hot Springs is in the enviable position of preserving and enhancing much of its remaining unique and valuable biologic resources, especially those on the slopes and hillsides of the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains. The City and its residents have evidenced strong support for these integral parts of the Coachella Valley environment. In every facet of community planning and development regulation, the City will have the opportunity to regulate growth and limit impacts. This will be accomplished through the thoughtful implementation of the General Plan, and the Zoning, Subdivision and Grading Ordinances. It can also be accomplished through the integration of the biological resource and open



space/conservation principles in public works projects, including road and highway development, and the design and construction of stormwater detention basins and drainage channels. Development on every level will provide an opportunity to protect and enhance the City's biological resources.

## **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Protection and preservation of City and regional biological resources, especially those sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered species of plants and wildlife and their habitats, and a functional, harmonious relationship and balance between nature and human development.

#### **Policy 1**

Maintain an accurate and regularly updated map and information base on sensitive plant and animal species and habitat occurring in the General Plan study area.

#### **Program 1 A**

The General Plan and related environmental data, as well as the Coachella Valley MSHCP, shall be periodically updated to maintain an accurate and effective mapping system and information base on sensitive plant and animal species occurring within the City and vicinity.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, CVAG

**Schedule:** Continuous; annual update.

#### **Policy 2**

Support all practical efforts to maintain a broad variety of habitats, including suitable habitat for rare and endangered species occurring in the City and vicinity.

#### **Program 2 A**

The City shall participate and be a pro-active partner in the development and implementation of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan with special emphasis on habitat located in or near the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, CVAG

**Schedule:** Continuous; annual update.

#### **Program 2 B**

Establish and maintain a broad range of contacts with local, county, state and federal agencies, as well as private non-profits, and consult and cooperate in efforts to maintain and broaden habitat conservation, especially where essential for the preservation of sensitive, rare and endangered species.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Program 2 C**

Until adoption of the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, the City shall continue to require the preparation of wildlife surveys and, as necessary, Habitat Conservation Plans, for new development in compliance with Federal Section 10a(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act and Section 2081 of the State Endangered Species Act.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Policy 3**

All development proposals on vacant lands shall be reviewed and evaluated to assure minimal impacts on existing habitat and wildlife.

#### **Program 3 A**

City shall assure a thorough assessment of impacts to habitat and/or wildlife associated with proposed development, including requiring the preparation of detailed biological resource surveys and mitigation programs in identified sensitive areas of the City.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 3 B**

City shall encourage developers to salvage naturally occurring desert plant materials for incorporation into project landscaping to the greatest extent possible and shall indicate utilization of these indigenous materials on project landscape plans, which provide or enhance wildlife habitat and serve to extend the local desert environment into the urban design of the City. Plans shall be submitted to the City for approval.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.



### **Program 3 C**

City shall prepare a comprehensive planting materials list, which shall include native and non-native, drought tolerant trees, shrubs and groundcovers that complement the local environment, provide habitat for local wildlife, and extend the desert into the built environment. A list of prohibited plant materials shall also be prepared.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02.

### **Policy 4**

Assure that sensitive habitat and wildlife areas, as well as state and federal lands, are appropriately buffered from urban development.

### **Program 4 A**

The General Plan Land Use, Circulation, and Open Space and Conservation Elements shall recognize, reflect and provide an effective buffer between urban-type development and other incompatible uses, and the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains and other sensitive wildlife and open space and conservation lands.

**Responsible Agencies:** City Council; Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 5**

Encourage and cooperate in the establishment of multiple use corridors that use drainage channels and utility easements to provide wildlife corridors and public interconnection between open space areas in the community and vicinity.

### **Program 5 A**

Consult and coordinate with the Riverside County Flood Control District, Southern California Edison and other appropriate public and quasi-public agencies, to encourage the establishment of a system of multiple use corridors for wildlife and public interconnection between open space areas in the community and vicinity.

**Responsible Agency:** Riverside County Flood Control District; Community Development Department; Southern California Edison

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 5 B**

Provide developers with detailed information on preservation and re-use of valuable top soils, use of locally appropriate xeriscape design concepts, and discourage unnecessary clearing of native desert landscape.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02.

### **Policy 6**

Pro-actively encourage and promote an appreciation of sensitive biological resources and the integrated local environment.

### **Program 6 A**

Develop or cooperate in the development and promotion of a comprehensive educational program making the public more aware of the City's biological resources. In this effort, staff shall solicit the aid of the Coachella Valley Mountain Conservancy, the Living Desert, The Bighorn Institute, and The Nature Conservancy and coordinate the program with a similar educational program for animal control.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02.

### **Program 6 B**

City shall investigate the possibility and appropriateness of establishing an interpretive trail system in the City's mountainous and other hiking and walking areas that educates users and enhances their appreciation for this and other wildlife communities in the City and vicinity.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The Archaeological and Historic Resources Element of the General Plan provides a summary of the cultural and historical traditions of the City of Desert Hot Springs and vicinity. It also provides the basis for the identification of and planning for present-day cultural activities and traditions. The Archaeological and Historic Resources Element is intended to briefly describe the documented pre-history and history of Desert Hot Springs, and set forth goals, policies and programs which preserve this heritage and help perpetuate it for future generations.

## BACKGROUND

Cultural traditions and artifacts are the most important links between the past, present and the future. They are the elements that bind communities together and are the common ground that provide community cohesiveness and historic and cultural perspective. The Archaeological and Historic Resources Element is directly related to the Arts and Culture, Biological Resources, Land Use, and Open Space and Conservation Elements, and may influence the Community Design Element.

Issues addressed in the Archaeological and Historical Resources Element are a part of those set forth in subdivision (b) of California Government Code Section 65560 and Public Resources Code Section 5076. Also, the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 21083.2(g), empowers and directs the community to require that adequate research and documentation be conducted when the potential for significant resources exists. A detailed discussion of resource management requirements and guidelines can be found in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and its technical appendix. The City currently reviews and provides comments on development proposals and the potential for impacts to archaeologically or historically significant

resources, and may require additional study if the potential for resources warrants. As future development proposals are received, they will be evaluated and the need for cultural resource assessments will be determined.

## THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

Based upon the current knowledge of artifacts and habitation sites dating back approximately 12,000 years, archaeologists have divided the pre-European epoch into five periods: Early Man Period, Paleo-Indian Period, Early Archaic Period, Late Archaic Period and the Late Prehistoric Period. Each is discussed below.

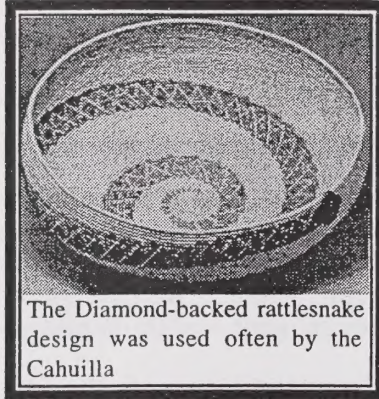
Hunting and butchering tools of the earliest prehistoric periods were distinguished by the use of large stone points to hunt and process large late ice age mammals, and the lack of milling stones and other food grinding implements.

One of the epoch's important characteristics is the lack of milling stones and other food grinding implements. It may have been that these earliest Americans took advantage of the vast numbers of potential game animals and subsisted primarily on an animal fat and protein diet.

As climate conditions and available food changed, local inhabitants started using smaller projectile points on the smaller game; there was also substantial migration going on during this period. Seeds, grains and their processing became more important about 4,000 years ago and stone-tools became more sophisticated; there was also a corresponding increase in cultural complexity and variation.



By about 1500 years ago, the bow and arrow had been introduced and a wider food base was exploited. Milling of food stuffs also continued extensively. By the latest period



The Diamond-backed rattlesnake design was used often by the Cahuilla

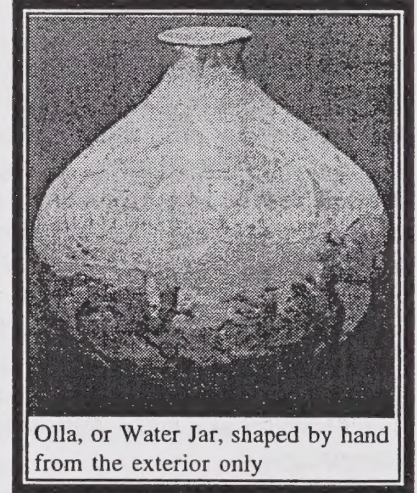
starting about 800 years ago to just before contact with Europeans, there is evidence of extensive contact and trade between local tribes and those of the Colorado River. This included the distribution of pottery across the upper Colorado and Mojave Deserts. It is from this period that ethnic or tribal affiliations are best known. In the Desert Hot Springs region, the oldest cultural remains date back about 1500 years and are located in the Anza Borrego Indian Hill Rock Shelter (also see General Plan EIR). The oldest radiocarbon dated occupation in the Coachella Valley comes from the intersection of Washington Street and Highway 111, a site known as Point Happy. The artifact was a Patayan-style broken pot that dated to about 900 years ago.

Habitation and village sites of numerous types developed throughout the area. These included villages occupied for extended periods of time, milling sites used seasonally as particular foods become available, lithic workshops and quarries for making stone tools and weapons, and rock art sites that were used for artistic/religious expression.

## Cahuilla Culture In Historic Times

The most recent identifiable native culture to evolve in the Coachella Valley region are the Desert Cahuilla. They are generally divided into three groups:

the Pass Cahuilla of the Banning-Beaumont area; the Mountain Cahuilla from the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains; and the Desert Cahuilla from the Coachella Valley as far south as today's Salton Sea. Rather than identified by a single name, membership was in terms of lineage or clans.



Olla, or Water Jar, shaped by hand from the exterior only

Clans had individually defined territories they called their own and used for hunting and gathering food and other resource necessities. The population prior to European contact is estimated to have ranged from 3,600 to 10,000. During the 1800s, however, the Cahuilla population was decimated by European disease, most notably smallpox, against which the Native peoples had no immunity. The Desert Cahuilla had many villages throughout the Coachella Valley, including those associated with Ancient Lake Cahuilla until its last occurrence 500 years ago. With the lake's disappearance the mountains, canyons and fault-related mesquite dunes became more important sources of water, food and fiber. Today, the Cahuilla Indian population closest to the planning area lives on the Agua Caliente Reservation.



## Known Local Prehistoric Resource Areas

Substantial portions of the planning area have been surveyed by archaeologists. Recorded significant archaeological resources are generally identified by a tri-nomial designation given the site by the Eastern Information Center (EIC) at the Archaeological Research Unit at the University of California at Riverside. Numerous archeological surveys and investigation/test reports have been conducted. Approximately thirty-two (32) prehistoric and historic resource sites have been recorded within the city limits and sphere-of-influence boundaries, of which 24 are prehistoric archeological sites and 8 are historic sites.

Many prehistoric sites identified in the General Plan study area have been recorded by the EIC, as well as The National Register of Historic Places, California Historic Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, the California Inventory of Historic Resources, and the Historic Properties Directory of the Office of Historic Preservation (Department of Parks and Recreation). These archives include information on prehistoric and historic sites and resources.

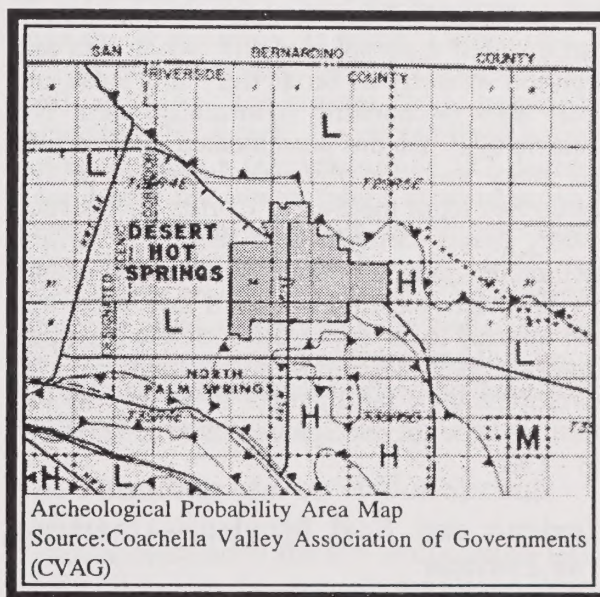
In the Desert Hot Springs area, fault zones and associated water and biological resources have harbored cultural resources in the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino mountains. There is a high probability that prehistoric resources will occur in the vicinity of fault-related mesquite and palms, as well as resources associated with mountain washes, streams and canyons. Mesquite thickets that generally occur in dune areas are another high probability category since mesquite and screwbean pods were staples in the diet of the region's Cahuilla Indians. The Mission Creek branch of the San Andreas fault passes through the city limits, while the Banning branch passes through the City's sphere-of-influence (SOI). Both areas should be considered as sensitive potential resources areas.

## Cahuilla Cultural Heritage Sites

Undiscovered prehistoric sites within the planning area probably exist which could expand our understanding of prehistoric life of the region. Many of these sites may be situated in Areas of High Sensitivity for Archeological Resources (see exhibit). It is likely that additional unmapped areas of high sensitivity are located within the planning area but can no longer be identified because the mesquite trees have been removed or the water source has disappeared. Other sites may be situated in Low Probability Areas outside the Areas of High Sensitivity for Archeological Resources.

## Prehistoric Resources

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) identifies the Archeological Probability Areas in the Desert Hot Springs area in the subsequent manner as an effort to conserve and protect these sensitive archeological areas:



N - National Register  
H - High  
M - Moderate  
L - Low

Of the four designations, only two, H (High) and L (Low), apply to the City and its SOI.



In many cases, it is not possible to determine whether sites include prehistoric archeological resources without conducting a comprehensive site specific field survey of the area being proposed for development.

## **THE HISTORIC PERIOD**

Sites of historical significance are generally more than fortyfive to fifty years of age, but range from the period of the earliest European contacts, around the end of the 1700s, to about the end of World War II. Types of potentially significant sites range from permanent trails and highways to living areas and small-scale remains of single activities. The following discusses the historic period and also identifies significant historical resources.

### **Earliest European History of the Desert Hot Springs Region**

Spaniards making forays northward from Mexico along the coast and the Colorado River were the first to explore the Desert Hot Springs region. Tradition has it that a Captain Juan Iturbe sailed a vessel into the Salton Sea and explored westerly as far as the Santa Rosa and Little San Bernardino Mountains area. No concrete evidence has been located to document this story and the physical isolation of the Salton Sea from the Sea of Cortez makes such a story closer to myth than fact. The earliest documented period of Spanish influence began in 1769 when explorers moved into what was then referred to as Upper California to establish a military, political and religious foothold. The development of land routes to supply inland missions brought the Spanish into the region in the 1770s.

### **Mexican and Post Mexican-American War Periods**

Although there is no historical evidence of settlements in the Desert Hot Springs area, by 1821 the region had fallen under the influence of Mexico as it secured its independence from Spain under the Treaty of Cordova. The issuance of land grants and the establishment of agricultural enterprises, under the organization of *rancheros*, dominated the region for the next thirty years. The defeat of Mexico in the Mexican-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 ushered

in a new era. With the region under American control and the discovery of gold in California, the stage was set for admittance of California into the union in 1850, and led to the influx of peoples from many countries. The first U.S. Government Surveys were made in the Coachella Valley in 1855-56, by surveyors Henry Washington, John La Croze and James G. McDonald, who observed a number of trails and roads crossing through the region.

### **The Bradshaw Trail and Ocean-to-Ocean Highway**

The most prominent of these trails was one labeled as a "road" on the U.S. Government Survey maps and ran along the course of the Whitewater River. It was joined by a trail that skirted the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains in a more southerly course.

The surveyors also noted an "Indian Trail" apparently passing through a portion of the study area west of Edom Hill.

By the 1880s, the trail along the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains had become the main route for travelers passing through the study area. By 1885 it had been identified as part of the road from San Bernardino to the Colorado River and was to become known as the Bradshaw Trail, one of the most important desert trails in Southern California during the 1860s and 70s. An historic route between Los Angeles and the Palo Verde Valley, the Bradshaw Trail was in fact an ancient Indian trade route variously named the Cocomaricopa Trail or the Halchidoma Trail. In 1862 the William David Bradshaw exploration party had "rediscovered" the route, which for the next few years served as the primary access to the goldfields along the Colorado River.

By the late 1870s the railroads expanded into the region and eventually connected the coast directly to Yuma. This completed second transcontinental railroad, authorized by Congress in 1866, and was later known as the Sunset Route. After the turn of the century the Cocomaricopa Trail was revived as the Bradshaw Highway, ultimately becoming State Highway 111.



In 1926, the federal government established the National Highway System, which included the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway that ran "along the Southern Pacific Railroad". Exact dates of construction are unclear, with archival sources tracing it to the late 1930s. Right-of-way for this highway was granted by the federal government in November of 1938, which was delineated as U.S. 60/70/99. Apparently proof of construction was never filed on this segment of the highway. A segment of Varner Road running through the City SOI was apparently part of the original Ocean-to-Ocean Highway.

### **Early Desert Hot Springs**

Available historic sources from 1856-1975 indicate that several old roads and Indian trails once crossed portions of the planning area. The area that was more recently occupied by Seven Palms Ranch (Desert Dunes Country Club) was recorded as containing an Indian village, with an Indian trail leading to the village site. U.S. Government Survey field notes of the 1850s describe the Cahuilla settlement:

"The rancherita at Seven Palms, in the upper Coachella Valley, was situated atop a low sandhill, surrounded by low, thorny mesquite bushes, and comprised 'some 8 or 10 huts and about 30 Indians, mostly old men, women, and children'. By the 1850s many were employed, at least seasonally, at white settlements west of the mountains".

The arrival of permanent settlers into the area around Desert Hot Springs seems not to have begun until the second decade of this century. Some took advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862 which allowed settlers access to unclaimed, surveyed public lands in the west. However, early government surveys recorded very little evidence of settlers in the Desert Hot Springs area before 1917.

### **Cabot Yerxa's Discovery of Hot Mineral Water**

Cabot Yerxa is credited for having discovered hot mineral water in the area of Desert Hot Springs. Born in the Dakota Territories in 1883 to trading post operators, he was a descendant of John Henry Cabot, discoverer of Newfoundland. As a young adult, Yerxa traveled to the Klondike in the Yukon

Territories in search of gold. While there, he opened a small grocery business. It was through the grocery business that Yerxa met Vice President Theodore Roosevelt. As a result of their friendship, Yerxa was appointed Postmaster of Sierra Madre, California. He served this post from 1906-1913.

Following his appointment as postmaster, Yerxa moved to the Desert Hot Springs area. Around 1912, Cabot Yerxa became one of the Desert Hot Springs area's first citizens when he began homesteading a 160 acre tract around the desert oasis of Two Bunch Palms.

After purchasing a burro that he named "Merry Christmas", he built his first house known as "Eagle's Nest" on the peak of a prominent hill. It comprised a one-room cabin with a fireplace that was constructed out of cement, wood, and stone. For water, Yerxa and Merry Christmas were forced to travel to the railway station at Garnet, a round trip of 14 miles.

In 1913 Yerxa discovered the hot springs that gave the community its name. Determined to find his own water supply, had Yerxa purchased well digging equipment and began an excavation for a well. He encountered natural hot water with a temperature of 132 degrees. Afraid that the water might contain arsenic, Yerxa used it only for bathing. He later dug a second well, located approximately 600 yards away, which produced cold water. Yerxa named the entire areas surrounding the wells "Miracle Hill". Sometime later Yerxa learned that he had actually dug these holes on either side of an earthquake fault.

### **The Founding of Desert Hot Springs**

Yerxa homesteaded the site until around 1918, leaving it to join the army during World War I. Upon his return from the war, Yerxa tried to interest developers in the resort potential of his hot springs.

It was not until 1932 that L.W. Coffee and Aubrey Wardman to ventured to develop the springs. After considering the pros and cons of developing hot mineral water in the area, Coffee was convinced of its potential by Desert Hot Springs' spectacular view of the snow-capped mountains.



Coffee procured the necessary equipment and supplies to drill a test well. He dug a well over 170 feet deep and struck hot mineral water. Coffee then dug a second well, which was also successful.

Completion of the second well led Coffee to subdivide the surrounding property into acre lots, and many were sold. The entire property, however, was soon tied up in litigation due to complications with the trust. In 1938 the trust was dissolved. The property reverted back to the original owners.

Aubrey Wardman of Whittier relieved Coffee's predicament by giving him complete control of his 160 acres to develop a community focused upon the area's therapeutic mineral water. Additional acreage was purchased by Wardman, and Coffee was able to develop the area into a promising health resort.

The town of Desert Hot Springs witnessed most of its early growth in the 1940s as a result of Coffee's efforts. In addition to selling land for homes, Coffee opened the first public bath house in Desert Hot Springs known as "Coffee's Hot Mineral Baths". Soon other bath houses opened and people began taking advantage of the therapeutic value of Desert Hot Springs' hot mineral waters. Consequently, Coffee became known as the "originator, founder and developer of Desert Hot Springs".

### **Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo**

Yerxa's intense fascination with the Indian lifestyle led him to construct "Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo". This 35-room Hopi-style pueblo was constructed of salvaged lumber and adobe bricks mixed with cement. Although the framing of the building took approximately seven years to complete, Yerxa continually worked on the pueblo for over twenty years. At the time of his death in 1965, the pueblo was still unfinished.

After Yerxa's death, Cole Eyraud, a Burbank business executive, purchased the property and formed the non-profit educational organization known as Landmark Conservators. Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo served as a museum, art gallery and trading post for many years. It has recently undergone renovations and other improvements, and is expected to re-open to the

public in Summer of 2000. It is located at 67-616 East Desert View Avenue.

### **Desert Hot Springs Heritage Properties/Historic Sites**

According to the Eastern Information Center's 1994 cultural resources records search, there are no National Register listed properties or California Historic Landmarks recorded within the planning area. Furthermore, there are no properties listed on the California Inventory of Historic Resources.

Desert Hot Springs does have one California Point of Historical Interest. This site is known as Yerxa's Discovery. A bronze plaque commemorating Cabot Yerxa's 1913 "discovery of hot well water" is located in front of Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo on Desert View Drive. Also important are Two Bunch Palms Artesian Well and Coffee's Well.

Additionally, approximately 40 properties in the City and its Sphere of Influence are listed in the Office of Historic Preservation's 1994 Historic Properties Directory.

For the most part, these properties comprise structures that are over 40 years of age that have been evaluated for National Register Status, but for one reason or another were determined ineligible for listing in the Register.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES POTENTIAL (CRP) MAP**

Based upon field and literature surveys conducted to date, a resource sensitivity map has been developed, which identifies various prehistoric and historic resource areas within the planning area. Field survey techniques used in past years for recording/documenting site surveys were more intuitive and less methodical than those practiced today.

Additional information can be made available on potentially sensitive archaeological resources areas by contacting the City Planning staff. The base data used to prepare the Cultural Resources Potential (CRP) Map are not published in order to protect resources from disturbance, damage or removal.



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

It is the obligation of the lead agency, the City of Desert Hot Springs, to assure that every reasonable effort is made to locate, identify and evaluate archaeological, historical and cultural sites within its jurisdiction. The City must determine what actions or development activities have the potential to adversely affect known or suspected sites of significance. The manner in which the City must review and address issues related to Archaeological and Historic Resources is set forth in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Appendix J, 1992 Edition). Projects involving a federal agency, federal funding or some other federal assistance fall under and must conform with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA).

As time passes and the community continues to develop, opportunities for documenting and preserving archaeological and historic sites and artifacts will decrease. The City should encourage the research, documentation and recordation to register appropriate sites and structures within the community and vicinity. In this manner, positive action can be taken to identify, preserve and pass on the important traditions and history of the community.

## **RESOURCES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage and resources, including historic and prehistoric cultural artifacts and traditions.

#### **Policy 1**

The City shall exercise its responsibility to locate, identify and evaluate archaeological, historical and cultural sites, and assure that appropriate action is taken to protect these resources.

#### **Program 1 A**

An archaeological and historical resources data base shall be established and maintained at City Hall, and shall incorporate information from the Eastern Information Center (EIC), focused cultural resource studies conducted in the study area, and other resources.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** Continuous; five year Element update.

#### **Policy 2**

Development or land use proposals, which have the potential to disturb or destroy sensitive cultural resources, shall be evaluated by a qualified professional and, if necessary, appropriate mitigation measures shall be incorporated into project approvals.

#### **Policy 3**

Make every effort to ensure the protection of sensitive archaeological and historic resources from vandalism and illegal collection.

#### **Program 3 A**

Maintain mapping information and similar location-oriented resources in a confidential manner and assure that only those with appropriate professional and organizational ties are provided access to these sensitive records.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 3 B**

In the course of reviewing development proposals and cultural surveys that identify sensitive resources, staff shall, where appropriate, encourage in-place preservation or the recovery and preservation of materials for later study and display.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** Continuous.



#### **Policy 4**

The City shall support the listing of eligible properties, structures or sites as potential historic landmarks and their inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **Program 4 A**

In cooperation with local historical associations, the City shall periodically review the historical and archaeological resources of the area for possible application for status as a historical landmark or inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department.

**Schedule:** Periodically.

#### **Program 4 B**

The City shall consider establishment of a Cultural Commission, which could meet with staff and elected officials in prioritizing and proposing action on the preservation and registration of important archaeological and historical resources in the community and vicinity.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Cultural Commission.

**Schedule:** Continuous; with annual meetings.



# WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Water Resources Element is to address issues of water quantity, quality and availability for current and future needs. An essential aspect of this element is the coordination and cooperation between the City and the Mission Springs Water District, and other water agencies responsible for supplying water to the City and Sphere-of-Influence (SOI). Waste water management has also become an increasingly important part of water management that is critical to the protection of ground water resources. The goals, policies and programs set forth in this element direct staff and City officials in the management of this essential resource.

## BACKGROUND

The Water Resources Element addresses one of the community's most basic needs and has a direct relationship to the Land Use Element, which has evolved to a major degree in response to the availability of water resources. Water resource issues are also associated with the Flooding and Hydrology Element and opportunities to protect groundwater and enhance groundwater recharge, as well as the Public Utilities and Fire and Police Protection Elements. The Water Resources Element is also related to the Community Design, Economic Development and Emergency Preparedness Elements.

Issue areas set forth in subdivision (d) of California Government Code Section 65302 are addressed in the Water Resources Element. Also, the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 21083.2(g), empowers the community to require that adequate research and documentation be conducted when the potential for significant impacts to water and other important resources exists.

Over the past few centuries, production of water in the Coachella Valley by Native Americans has included the direct use and diversion of streams in the mountain canyons, the digging of

wells to intercept the aquifer in Indian Wells, and the exploiting of artesian wells that occur in association with the Banning and Mission Creek Branches of the San Andreas Fault system in the City and Sphere-of-Influence (SOI). Early mechanical water production in the Desert Hot Springs area started with the drilling of wells for domestic purposes, with earliest results near the Mission Creek Fault yielding geothermal water, which in turn helped give birth to the City.

It was not until decades later that the enormous extent of the groundwater resource in the Coachella Valley was recognized. There has been inflow of groundwater throughout the Coachella Valley, however, fault barriers, constrictions in basin profiles, and areas of low permeability have limited and controlled the movement of groundwater. Analysis of these structures by the US Geological Survey and the California Department of Water Resources has determined that groundwater basins are separated into distinct subbasins and subareas within subbasins. The first 1,000 feet of the underlying sands and gravels and other water-bearing fill eroded into the fault-controlled valley floor comprise a storage capacity in the Valley of more than 39 million acre feet (one acre foot equals about 326,000 gallons).

## Domestic Water Resource

In the City and its Sphere area, domestic water services are primarily provided by the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) utilizing wells to extract groundwater from the Mission Creek subbasin. A limited area of the City's southern Sphere is located within the service boundaries of the Coachella Valley Water District. The subbasin groundwater source is currently being recharged by natural sources, i.e. precipitation and runoff from the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains. The MSWD, in cooperation with the Desert Water Agency, is actively developing facilities to provide for additional groundwater recharge into the Mission Creek subbasin through imported water carried by the Metropolitan Water District aqueduct, which passes through the west end of the City and its SOI. Portions of



the City and its Sphere-of-Influence also occur within the limits of the Garnet Hill subbasin, which is bounded by the Banning Fault on the north and the Garnet Hill Fault on the south.

### **Mission Creek Subbasin**

The Mission Creek Subbasin is bounded on the north and south by the Mission Creek and Banning Faults, respectively, to the west by the San Bernardino Mountains and on the east by the Indio Hills (Edom Hill). The basin is underlain by water-bearing Ocotillo Conglomerate and Cabezon Fanlomerate deposits of the Mission Creek upland. While direct recharge from rainfall onto the valley floor is considered insignificant, both surface and subsurface discharge into the subbasin from major drainages, including Mission Creek, and Little and Big Morongo Creeks, does provide a meaningful natural recharge to the subbasin. The Mission Creek Subbasin is also naturally recharged by surface and subsurface flows into the Desert Hot Springs Subbasin and, in turn, into the Mission Creek Subbasin. Estimates of natural surface and subsurface recharge have ranged from 6,000 to 9,100 acre feet per year, with the latest analysis yielding an estimate of 6,870 acre feet per year. Groundwater flows well within the subbasin in a generally southeasterly direction, breaking out at or near the surface along the Banning Fault in the vicinity of 20th Avenue and at Willow Hole just east of Mountain View Road.

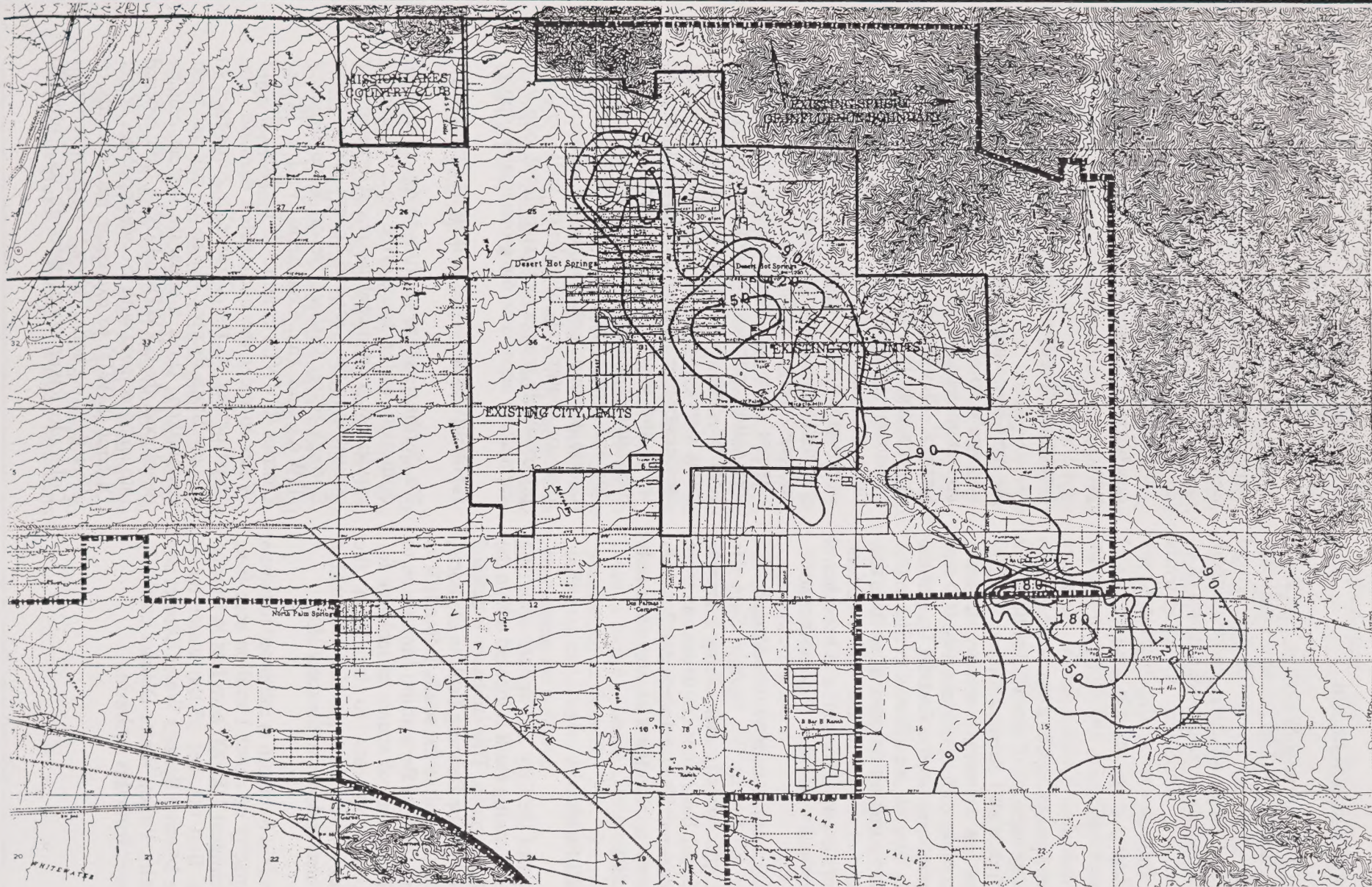
Based on state and federal analyses, the Mission Creek Subbasin has a storage capacity of approximately 2.6 million acre feet. Current estimates of recoverable water within the subbasin totals approximately 1 million acre feet. As a reference, the Mission Springs Water District produces (pumps) an average of 2.43 billion gallons, or about 7,454 acre-feet per year.

### **Geothermal Resources**

Geothermal waters (hot mineral water) are the hallmark of the City and have been an important community asset that has stimulated spa hotel and other development in the City and the vicinity. Geothermal waters are associated with the San Andreas Fault Zone and specifically the Mission Creek Fault, along which the major geothermal resources of the Coachella Valley are located.

Waters in this zone range in temperature from 23 to 93° C (76 to 200° F) with two mechanisms thought to be at work: the accessibility to depth of the water table and the relatively shallow geothermal sources. In the Coachella Valley, the San Andreas Fault Zone, including the Mission Creek Fault, are creating an extended and widening valley of great depth. In the vicinity of the Salton Sea this process has allowed the generation of even higher geothermal water temperatures allowing these resources to be exploited for large-scale electric power production.





Source: US Department of Energy, Geothermal Energy and The California Energy Commission  
 Final Report, May 23, 1977 - July 31, 1978 Vol. II: Appendices/List of Illustrations, Plate 1

Limits of available data





## **Desert Hot Springs Subbasin**

The Desert Hot Springs Subbasin, and more specifically the Miracle Hill Subarea within this basin, is the primary source of geothermal waters in the City and Sphere. As mentioned, this subarea generates water temperatures of up to 200°F with a somewhat differing water chemistry from waters in the Mission Creek Subbasin, being lower in both calcium ( $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ) and bicarbonate ( $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$ ), and higher in sodium ( $\text{Na}^{1+}$ ) and sulfate ( $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$ ). While the entire Desert Hot Springs Subbasin is estimated to have a storage capacity of about 2.3 million acre feet, the Miracle Hill Subarea serving the City and Sphere has a storage capacity of about 400,000 acre feet with an estimated 40,000 acre feet in storage within the first 60 feet of the water table. The latest estimates available (for 1977) placed pumpage or extractions from this subbasin at between 500 and 600 acre feet. These waters are used for spas and hot mineral baths rather than as a source of potable water.

Natural sources of recharge to the Miracle Hill Subarea of the Desert Hot Springs Subbasin are from Little Morongo and Long Canyons, with additional but minor contributions from smaller drainages. The total annual inflow into this subbasin is estimated at approximately 3,080 acre feet.

## **Garnet Hill Subbasin**

That portion of the City and Sphere occurring south of the Banning Fault is located within the Garnet Hill Subbasin. This subbasin is defined and bounded by the Banning Fault to the north, the Garnet Hill Fault to the south, Edom Hill to the east and the San Bernardino Mountains to the west. The principal source of recharge for this subbasin appears to be from the Whitewater River through the permeable deposits which underlie Whitewater Hill.

The Garnet Hill Subbasin is estimated to have a storage capacity of about 1 million acre feet, with an estimated 100,000 acre feet in storage within the first 60 feet of the water table. Neither the Mission Springs Water District nor the Coachella Valley Water District currently produce water from this subbasin.

## **Overdraft in the Mission Creek Subbasin**

Although the Mission Creek subbasin experienced a general rise in water levels between 1938 and 1952, studies indicate that water levels have steadily declined by approximately 0.5 to 1.5 feet per year since 1952. The subbasin is currently in an overdraft condition of approximately 2 lineal feet per year.

## **Consumptive Demand of City**

As the City continues to develop it could raise city-wide total domestic water demand to approximately 57 million gallons per day upon General Plan buildout. It is estimated that approximately 40% of domestic water consumed is reintroduced into the groundwater table and is not lost. This includes a percentage of irrigation water applied to residential and golf course landscaping. All of these uses are factored into the Mission Springs Water District's per capita consumption estimate of 297 gallons per day. Impacts that are project-specific may be more or less on a per capita basis, depending on the type of development, the density in residential developments, and the level and type of landscaping and water-dependent amenities within each project. As demand generated by residential and golf course development continues to increase, the real or potential overdraft will become progressively greater, with significant long-term cumulative impacts on the groundwater supply.

## **Groundwater Replenishment Program**

To further assure an on-going supply of domestic water to service the expanding residential, recreational and resort development occurring in the City and Sphere, the Mission Springs Water District, Desert Water Agency (DWA) and the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) contracted for State Project Water to meet the anticipated demand. The construction of the Coachella Aqueduct to convey State Project Water has not yet been undertaken. Until a separate system can be developed, the CVWD and DWA have entered into an agreement with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) to exchange entitlements to allow the Coachella Valley to be provided with Colorado River water through its Colorado



River Aqueduct, which passes through the northwest portion of the Coachella Valley in the vicinity of the Whitewater River.

Since 1973, Colorado River water has been directed to spreading ponds in the Whitewater River, which are recharging the Whitewater River Garnet Hill subbasin. From 1973 through 1997 approximately 1.4 million acre-feet of Colorado River water has been diverted to recharge the Whitewater subbasin. Now these Districts are implementing plans to use this same resource to recharge the Mission Creek Subbasin through a diversion of aqueduct supplies, which will flow into recharge basins planned for construction in the upper Mission Creek Wash. Construction of the recharge basins is expected to be completed by winter 2001. A water replenishment fee will be assessed after the program is in place to help defray infrastructure and operation costs.

Supplemental water for the Coachella Valley, including the Mission Creek Subbasin, is assured through the year 2035. Various agreements and pacts have been entered into, which provide for additional water supplies, including the Colorado River Compact of 1922, the Boulder Canyon Act of 1928, the Seven Party Agreement of 1931, and the 1964 Supreme Court Decree in *Arizona vs. California*. While there is an overall decrease in water quality from Colorado River sources, which provides water higher in total dissolved solids, the quality difference is not regarded as significant. Please see the discussion on water quality, below.

## Water Quality

Water quality in the Coachella Valley is generally good to excellent. Exceptions are primarily limited to perched and semi-perched water tables occurring in the southern portions of the Whitewater River subbasin where on-going crop irrigation has increased total dissolved solids.

Another more recent impact on area groundwater has been contamination associated with long-term discharge from on-lot septic systems. In areas with high rates of percolation, septic system effluent may not spend adequate time in the soil strata to be cleaned by microbes and filtering and can add nitrates to groundwater. Waste water contains

contaminants, such as nitrogen, bacteria and organic chemicals that may degrade the quality of groundwater and even render it unsuitable for human consumption. Of particular concern is nitrate ( $\text{NO}_3$ ), which can eventually reach the water table even after all other contaminants have broken down or been effectively treated by passage through the soils column.

The City and surrounding area still have about 5,000 septic tank systems in operation, which are a significant concern for potential groundwater contamination. While high nitrate levels have been identified elsewhere in the Coachella Valley, Mission Springs Water District indicates that water quality in its service area has not been adversely impacted by the use of on-lot septic systems. To date, none of the common potential contaminants, including human fecal coliform, nitrate, chlorine, or sulfate, have exceeded allowable maximum contaminant levels. The City has become a member of the Groundwater Guardian Program, which seeks to address threats of contamination and to preclude increased threats through a variety of management strategies.

## Quality of Surface Waters

With the anticipated importation of Colorado River water via the MWD aqueduct, the water quality in the Mission Creek Subbasin may be somewhat affected. The following table indicates the relative quality of surface waters recharging the subbasin.



**Table: IV-2  
Mineral Analysis of Representative Surface Waters**

| Source                 | Whitewater River<br>(North)        | Snow Creek | Colorado River | Mission Creek |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| Constituent            | epm <sup>1</sup> /ppm <sup>2</sup> | epm/ppm    | epm/ppm        | epm/ppm       |
| Ca                     | 1.75/35                            | 0.50/10    | 3.97/79        | 1.30/26       |
| Mg                     | 0.90/11                            | 0.0/0      | 2.31/79        | 0.71/9        |
| Na                     | 0.62/14                            | 0.47/11    | 4.78/110       | 0.26/6        |
| K                      | 0.108/4.2                          | 0.04/1.6   | 0.11/4.3       | 0.06/2.4      |
| Cl                     | 0.14                               | 0/0        | 6.01/213       | 0.17/6        |
| Total Dissolved Solids | 201 ppm                            | 55 ppm     | 727 ppm        | 118 ppm       |

Source: DWR Bulletin No. 108: Coachella Valley Investigation, California Department of Water Resources, July 1964.

<sup>1</sup> epm = Chemical equivalents per million.

<sup>2</sup> ppm = Parts per million by weight.

The above table indicates that natural recharge from the Mission Creek surface waters is low in constituent minerals and total dissolved solids, providing the subbasin with a high quality source of natural recharge. In comparison, imported water from the Colorado River is about six times higher in total dissolved solids (TDS) than the Mission Creek source. The impacts of Colorado River recharge waters on water quality in the Desert Hot Springs area may be promoted by the prevailing horizontal groundwater flow parallel to the bedding of alluvium deposits. As a result, movement of groundwater parallel to the bedding is somewhat encouraged, and vertical mixing of recharge and deeper portions of the water table is somewhat retarded. This parallel bedding of deposits notwithstanding, there is good potential for vertical mixing within the subbasin, and the quality of groundwater in the Desert Hot Springs area can be expected to remain relatively high.

### **California Regional Water Quality Control Board**

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (WQCB) implements federal and state laws established to assure planning, implementation, management and enforcement, including penalties for noncompliance in the

control of water quality. Major water quality control legislation includes the Federal Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Applicable California statutes and administrative law include but are not limited to the California Water Code, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Code of Regulations, and a variety of other codes such as Health and Safety Code, Fish and Game Code, and Public Resources Code.

In the Coachella Valley, the primary issues addressed by the WQCB are agricultural drainage, geothermal power impacts, the New River, Salton Sea, Mission Creek and other sources of surface water. There are numerous other locations monitored by the WQCB, where inappropriate disposal of hazardous and toxic materials have threatened to contaminate groundwater. These range from leaking fuel storage tanks, illegal discharges of human or animal waste, dumping of waste oils and other hazardous liquids.

### **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)**

The NPDES implements the federal Clean Water Act and was adopted in 1990. It requires the development, adoption and implementation



of plans and programs for stormwater management, which must, among other things, "...effectively prohibit non-storm water discharge into the storm drain" and "require controls to reduce the discharge of pollutants from storm water systems to waters of the United States to the Maximum Extent Practical". The legislation also makes the implementation of pollutant control measures exempt from CEQA.

One of the primary strategies to comply with the provisions of NPDES is the use of on-site stormwater retention or detention basins within any new development one acre or larger. These facilities may in some instances include artificial wetlands that use this biologically active zone to break down potential pollutants before they can contaminate surface runoff or reach the water table through percolation. These intercept structures will also be important in capturing sand and sediment before it is discharged into drainage facilities.

## **Water Conservation**

### **Water Conservation Efforts**

Water conservation is essential as both a short-term and long-term resource management strategy. With increasing demands on the water supply, continuing efforts to reduce per capita consumption are a priority. One of the best opportunities for water conservation has been in the area of landscape design and maintenance. Fortunately, City residents have shown an appreciation for the native desert environment and the excellent opportunity it provides to reduce the use of turf grasses and other types of heavily water-dependent landscaping, with potentially significant water conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

The water resource and its delivery cost money, whether the service is provided by a private company or a public agency. There is a direct relationship between the cost of a resource and how thoughtfully it is used. Inevitably, the District shall continue to raise rates to all its customers. As future costs of the water resource and its delivery rise, individual conservation efforts can also be expected to increase.

The City has adopted a water conserving landscape ordinance as required by state law, which requires that new landscape plans be designed to incorporate more native and locally compatible drought-tolerant planting materials and efficient irrigation systems. Water conservation should be second nature to desert dwellers, yet the need to control and manage our use of this limited resource must be constantly restated. The long-term viability of our community and the Valley depend upon it.

To further reduce the impacts of development on groundwater supplies, the MSWD and DWA have adopted a wide range of "Best Management Practices" and programs. These include free water audits and conservation incentives, enforced use of conserving technologies in new development, landscape water conservation, public information programs, and conservation pricing.

Future opportunities may include waste water reclamation strategies to utilize tertiary treated waste water for golf courses, landscape and other irrigation purposes. The Horton treatment plant has an installed capacity of approximately 1 million gallons per day. While the District does not currently provide tertiary treated water for this purpose, future development may make this type of conservation effort cost-effective.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The wise use and conservation of water resources will be a continuing central theme of community development planning in Southern California. Desert Hot Springs and other local communities have developed programs to extend the use of efficient landscape and irrigation design, and to encourage the use of water efficient appliances and fixtures in homes and businesses. The City has an important role to play in the long-term protection of this finite and ever more valuable resource.

Groundwater resource subbasins do not respect jurisdictional lines and the threat of pollution or contamination of groundwater must be viewed on a regional as well as a local level. Effective future stormwater management will also help protect groundwater and preserve capacity in



stormwater facilities. Protection of our major mountain watersheds will also assure preservation of a viable long-term source of natural groundwater recharge to the City and the larger subbasin.

## **WATER RESOURCES GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

A dependable long-term supply of clean and healthful domestic water and hot mineral water to meet the needs of all segments of the community.

### **GOAL 2**

An informed public that respects the City's finite water resource and maximizes protection and conservation efforts for the benefit of the entire community.

#### **Policy 1**

To the greatest extent practical, require the use of low water consuming, drought tolerant landscape plantings as a means of reducing water demand, and coordinate with DWA, MSWD and CVWD to strengthen education/public relations programs to inform residents of the full range of water saving techniques available.

#### **Program 1 A**

Continue implementation of the water conservation-oriented landscape ordinance in compliance with State Assembly Bill 325 (AB 325), by requiring the use of natural and drought resistant planting materials and efficient irrigation systems.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 1 B**

Coordinate and cooperate with DWA, MSWD and CVWD in the continued development of educational materials and programs that encourage and facilitate water conservation throughout the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; DWA, MSWD; CVWD and DWA

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

The City shall encourage, facilitate and/or require the use of water conserving appliances and fixtures in all new development, as required by state law.

#### **Program 2 A**

The City shall provide information on the use of low-flush toilets, and low-flow showerheads and faucets, and shall require the application of water conserving technologies in conformance with Section 17921.3 of the Health and Safety Code, Title 20, California Administrative Code Section 1601(b), and applicable sections of Title 24 of the State Code.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** Continuous

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall confer and coordinate with the DWA, MSWD and CVWD to enhance groundwater recharge concurrent with prudent flood plain management.

#### **Program 3 A**

To the extent practical, encourage the efforts of County Flood Control and the Mission Springs Water District to design flood control facilities that also enhance opportunities for groundwater recharge in the Mission Creek, Desert Hot Springs and Garnet Hill subbasins.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County Flood Control; DWA, MSWD; CVWD

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 3 B**

Establish regulations and guidelines for the development and maintenance of project-specific on-site retention/detention basins, which implement the NPDES program, enhance groundwater recharge and complement regional flood control facilities.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Engineer; MSWD; CVWD

**Schedule:** 2000-01.



#### **Policy 4**

Coordinate with the Desert Water Agency, Mission Springs Water District, Coachella Valley Water District, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and other appropriate agencies to share information on potential groundwater contaminating sources.

#### **Program 4 A**

Develop and maintain a system to share records and technical information with DWA, MSWD, CVWD, CRWQCB and other appropriate agencies regarding all sites which have the potential to contaminate groundwater resources serving the City.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; DWA, MSWD; CVWD; CRWQCB

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 4 B**

Evaluate all proposed land use and development plans for their potential to create groundwater contamination hazards from point and non-point sources, and confer with other appropriate agencies to assure adequate review.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 5**

The City shall encourage or require existing and new development to connect to the sewage treatment system of the Mission Springs Water District.



# AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Air Quality Element is to coordinate the planning of land use, circulation, housing and other City policies with their potential effects on air quality. It is the intent of this element and air quality planning in the region and locally to meet ambient air standards set by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

## BACKGROUND

One of the most essential issues associated with public health and safety is community air quality. The Air Quality Element is directly related to the type and intensity of land uses established in the Land Use Element, and the number, length and timing of traffic trips established in the Circulation Element. It is also related to the Economic Development Element, which addresses air quality and other valuable natural resources important to the local economy. This Element is also related to the amount and rate of housing development established in the Land Use and Housing Elements, and to the amount of open space planned for preservation in the Open Space and Conservation Element.

State Assembly Bill 2595 was enacted by the Legislature in 1988, and became known as the California Clean Air Act. The purpose of the act was to assure that the future health and welfare of the people of the State of California and the State's environment and economy are protected, regardless of action or direction from the federal government. State Implementation Plans are designed to meet ambient air quality standards by the deadlines specified in the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) and emission reduction targets of the California Clean Air Act (CCAA). These Acts base the extent of required emission reductions and the length of time to attain standards on the severity of a District's pollution.

Responsibility for air quality management in the State is also the responsibility of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which has taken a committed approach to expeditious implementation of the Act. The CARB has been entrusted with an overseer role, to advise and evaluate local air pollution control agency and District efforts to comply with CCAA requirements.

The Coachella Valley and the City of Desert Hot Springs are located within the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB), which is regulated by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (District). The District is responsible for regional planning affecting a variety of areas, including air quality. The District has identified two areas of air quality degradation having to do with ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and micron-sized particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>). Associated issues, including land development and traffic generation, are also associated with the District's coordinated air quality management efforts.

The regional Air Quality Management Plan, a multi-pronged, multi-tier effort to regulate pollutant emissions from a wide range of sources, is also the responsibility of the District. The Plan's implementation affects city and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments regulatory roles, and is also meant to result in lowering the production of ozone/photochemical smog, which is transported into the Valley.

As a member of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the City is also involved in the regional management of air quality through the cooperative implementation of the Coachella Valley PM<sub>10</sub> Plan. This plan has been jointly developed by the District, CVAG and its member cities and has been approved by the U.S. EPA. The CVAG cities are nationally recognized as leaders in the management of PM<sub>10</sub>. The prevailing conditions that have spurred the development and implementation of this plan are discussed below.



CVAG and the City have also participated in the development and implementation of the Regional Mobility Element of the Regional Comprehensive Plan developed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Addressing federal and State law requiring a regional transportation plan, the element focuses on issues of roadway congestion and air quality management.

### **Climate and Air Quality**

Desert Hot Springs and the entire Coachella Valley comprise a geographically and meteorologically unique area wholly contained within the Salton Sea Air Basin. The region is currently impacted by significant air pollution levels caused by the transport of pollutants from coastal air basins to the west, primarily ozone, and by primarily locally generated PM<sub>10</sub>. The Valley is isolated from coastal influences by surrounding mountains, which create a hot and dry low lying desert. As the desert heats up it draws cooler coastal air through the narrow San Geronio Pass, generating strong and sustained winds that cross the most active fluvial (water caused) and aeolian (wind) erosion zones in the Valley. These strong winds suspend and transport large quantities of sand and dust, reducing visibility, damaging property and constituting a significant health threat.

The region is also susceptible to air inversions, which trap a layer of stagnant air near the ground where it can be further loaded with pollutants. These inversions create conditions of haziness, which is caused by moisture, suspended dust, and a variety of chemical aerosols emitted by trucks and automobiles, furnaces and other sources.

The City of Desert Hot Springs, in relation to other areas in Southern California, essentially has good air quality. In the past few decades noticeable deterioration of air quality has occurred due to increased development and population growth, traffic, construction activity and various site disturbances. It is apparent that although air pollution is emitted from various sources in the Coachella Valley, substantial degradation of air quality may be attributed primarily to sources outside of the Valley.

### **POLLUTANTS**

Air pollutants are generally classified in two categories, primary and secondary. Primary pollutants are those which are a direct consequence of energy production and utilization, while secondary pollutants are those which undergo chemical changes after emission. Primary pollutants typically affect only local areas, and do not undergo chemical modification or further dispersion. Secondary pollutants, on the other hand, do disperse and undergo chemical changes under conditions of high ambient temperatures and high rates of solar insolation. Primary sources and their pollutants are a direct consequence of the combustion of petroleum and other fuels resulting in the production of oxides of carbon, sulphur, nitrogen, and a number of reactive hydrocarbons and suspended particulates. Principal secondary pollutants are termed oxidants and include ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), peroxy nitrates, nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and chemical aerosols.

### **Sensitive Receptors**

The potentially serious detrimental effects caused by even the most common pollutants is of widespread concern. Ozone, particulates, carbon monoxide and other pollutants pose a very real threat to health and property in the desert. The region's high median age implies that a major portion of residents are particularly susceptible to respiratory distress from the two principal pollutants of concern, ozone and PM<sub>10</sub>. Other sensitive receptors include hospitals and nursing homes, schools and parks.

The following is a brief summary of the primary criteria pollutants that can be found in the Desert Hot Springs area.

### **Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)**

Ozone is most commonly associated with smog, and is a pungent, colorless, highly reactive gas which is the main component of photochemical smog. This is a daily occurrence that commonly takes place from the pollution emitted primarily by motor vehicles. The potential impact ozone can have on human health is significant, as ozone molecules react with sensitive lung tissues, irritating and



inflaming the lungs, compromising the body's ability to fight respiratory infections. Ozone can also cause extensive damage to vegetation and has been associated with major damage to forests to the west and elsewhere throughout the world.

The Coachella Valley has a history of exceeding federal ozone standards, although the number of days and months exceeding the federal standard have dropped steadily over the past decade. The Coachella Valley is currently (year 2000) classified as a "severe-17" ozone non-attainment area under the federal Clean Air Act. The area must comply with federal ozone air quality standards by November 15, 2007, which is 17 years from the date the Clean Air Act was enacted.

Although some ozone is produced locally in the Coachella Valley, ozone monitoring data indicate that federal ozone exceedances in the Coachella Valley are largely the result of pollutant transport from the South Coast Air Basin, through the Banning Pass, into the Coachella Valley. The majority of smog experienced in the Desert Hot Springs area results from the transport of pollutants from Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Although it is difficult to quantify the amount of ozone pollutants contributed from other regions, improved air quality in the Coachella Valley is partly dependent upon reduced ozone emissions in communities in the South Coast Air Basin.

### Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>)

Small and suspended particles, both solid and liquid, such as dust, sand, metallic and mineral particles, road-surfacing materials, pollen, smoke, fumes and aerosols are generally referred to as particulate matter. These various particles are categorized by "settling" characteristics, and those which are the size of 10 microns or smaller are referred to as PM<sub>10</sub>. PM<sub>10</sub> particles can cause serious health problems, as they can pass through the lung's filtering system, lodge deep in the lung's tissues, and directly irritate these tissues. PM<sub>10</sub> is considered one of the most prevalent forms of pollution and health impacts in the Desert Hot Springs area, and therefore is discussed further in relation to "Blow and Effects", below.

The Coachella Valley has a history of elevated PM<sub>10</sub> levels. In 1993, the Coachella Valley was reclassified from a "moderate" to "serious" non-attainment area for PM<sub>10</sub> by the U.S. EPA. The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and its member cities have worked closely with one another to implement the measures set forth by the "State Implementation Plan for PM<sub>10</sub> in the Coachella Valley," which outlines reasonably available measures for controlling PM<sub>10</sub>. Recent air quality monitoring data indicate that, with few exceptions, the Coachella Valley has attained the federal PM<sub>10</sub> standard for three consecutive years, and is now eligible for reconsideration by the U.S. EPA as having attained this standard. The EPA is expected to issue its opinion on attainment status in the year 2000.

The health effects associated with PM<sub>10</sub> are more widespread than previously thought, according to recent research and analysis. Since the Coachella Valley's designation as a "non-attainment area" for meeting federal PM<sub>10</sub> standards, large areas of California have been added to this category of impact. And while federal and state regulations have heretofore focused on particles of 10 microns or smaller, significant health concerns are now focusing further on the health effects of particles of 2.5 microns.

Efforts to control and limit the generation of PM<sub>10</sub> have been successful through the implementation of the Coachella Valley PM<sub>10</sub> Plan. To further facilitate the management programs established in the plan, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and CVAG have expanded monitoring of weather conditions and pollutant levels. Expansion of the program is expected to help local jurisdictions implement control measures and to substantiate city claims for reimbursement for major wind events.

### OTHER POLLUTANTS

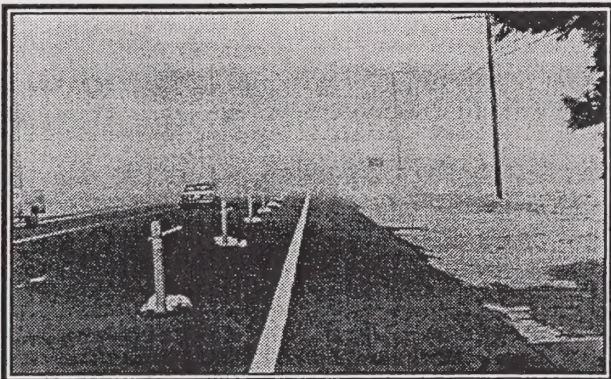
Nitric Oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), commonly referred to as NO<sub>x</sub>, are the two most significant oxides of nitrogen for air pollution. NO<sub>x</sub> is formed as a byproduct of combustion. NO<sub>x</sub> levels may be imported from air basins to the west, or may increase locally with inversion layers. *Carbon Monoxide (CO)* is a colorless,



odorless, toxic gas which is generally produced by the incomplete combustion of carbon containing fuels. Carbon Monoxide passes through the lungs directly into the blood stream, binding with hemoproteins and reducing the amount of oxygen reaching the vital organs such as the heart, brain and tissues. Levels of concern are generally found along heavily traveled roadways during periods of limited air movement.

Of all of these pollutants, ozone and  $PM_{10}$  are the most prevalent in the Desert Hot Springs area. By integrating CVAG and SCAQMD efforts in the development of air quality management plans, the City assures a more efficient regulation, monitoring and response appropriate to local meteorological conditions.

### Blowsand Effects



In the Desert Hot Springs area,  $PM_{10}$  comes mostly from locally generated fugitive dust. Each year, winter rains cause erosion of adjacent mountains, and water run-off produces and sorts substantial deposits of gravel and sand throughout the major drainage areas in the Valley. During the spring months and at other times of the year, persistent and strong winds carry the sand methodically southeast through the center of the Valley. This process effectively combines water and wind erosion to generate a wide range of sand and very fine dust.

Sometimes referred to as “blowsand”, this natural sand migration produces  $PM_{10}$  in two ways: (1) by direct particle erosion and fragmentation (natural  $PM_{10}$ ), and (2) by secondary effects, such as sand deposits on road surfaces that can be ground into  $PM_{10}$  by moving vehicles, and re-suspended in the air by those vehicles (man-made  $PM_{10}$ ).

Dust, sand and other blowing particulate matter are deposited on fabrics, buildings and automobiles and animal respiratory systems. Extensive wind-borne soil can obliterate landscaping and dirty streets. Losses and damage occur to materials and finishes, as blowing sand can pit windshields, destroy finishes and require additional cleaning and sweeping of exposed areas. Dust on vegetation can suppress plant growth and interfere with respiration through leaves.

$PM_{10}$  is associated with adverse health effects, including reduced lung function. Children and the elderly are considered especially susceptible, as are those suffering from asthma, bronchitis, or cardio-pulmonary distress.  $PM_{10}$  has been shown to generally have an adverse impact on mortality and morbidity.

### Air Quality Monitoring Stations

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and more recently the South Coast Air Quality Management District, have operated two regional air quality monitors in the Coachella Valley, one at the Palm Springs Regional Airport and the other in the downtown area of the City of Indio.

### State and Federal Standards

State and federal ambient air quality standards are set at levels believed adequate to protect the health of the most sensitive population groups, particularly the elderly, children and people with respiratory diseases. State standards are more restrictive than federal.

The following table provides a breakdown of the pollutants monitored in the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the applicable State and federal standards.



**Table IV-3  
State and Federal Ambient Air Quality  
Standards**

| <b>Pollutant</b>      | <b>State Standards<br/>Time/Averaging Conc.</b> | <b>Federal Standards<br/>Time/Average Conc.</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Ozone                 | 1 Hour/.09 ppm                                  | 1 Hour/0.12 ppm                                 |
| Carbon<br>Monoxide    | 1 Hour/20 ppm<br>8 Hour Ave./9.0 ppm            | 1 Hour/35.0 ppm<br>8 Hour Ave./9.0 ppm          |
| Nitrogen<br>Dioxide   | 1 Hour/0.25 ppm                                 | Annually /0.053 ppm                             |
| Sulfur<br>Dioxide     | 1 Hour/0.25 ppm<br>24 Hours/0.04 ppm            | Annually/0.03 ppm<br>24 Hours/0.14 ppm          |
| Particulate<br>Matter | 24 Hours/50ug/m3<br>AGM/30ug/m3                 | 24 Hours/150ug/m3<br>AAM/50ug/m3                |

Notes: ppm= parts per million; AAG = Annual Geometric Mean; AAM = Annual Arithmetic Mean  
Source: "1997 Air Quality Management Plan," South Coast Air Quality Management District.

With the greater attention being dedicated to particulate matter, monitoring for PM<sub>10</sub> has been expanded both through temporary research and field data collection stations as well as the siting of permanent wind speed and pollutant measuring equipment.

### **Developer's Air Quality Management Manual**

In response to requirements of SCAQMD to monitor air quality impacts associated with site disturbance and grading activities, in 1992 the City initiated preparation of a manual to assist developers in controlling air quality impacts. The Air Quality Management Plan to Control PM<sub>10</sub> and Other Emissions has been prepared as a practical tool for developers, consultants, and contractors to report on air quality impacts and mitigation measures associated with individual developments.

The manual's step-by-step procedures also include a menu of activities and programs designed to reduce development impacts to the lowest practical level. It includes methods for calculating potential dust generation and construction vehicle emissions through simple worksheets. A wide variety of methods for controlling impacts are described, including a comprehensive list of vendors providing dust control and other pollution management

services. The City has received particular recognition from SCAQMD for this pro-active approach to air quality protection.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District, CVAG and the City of Desert Hot Springs share responsibility to monitor pollutant levels and regulate air pollution sources. With the installation of additional monitoring devices in the Whitewater River, the District has been collecting data to establish a "naturally occurring" or "background" level for PM<sub>10</sub> in the Coachella Valley. This data will allow a more meaningful estimate of manmade PM<sub>10</sub> emissions.

The issues addressed in the Air Quality Element are a part of those set forth in the California Government Code, Section 65302(b), where within the requirements set forth for the Circulation Element, the Government Code conditions that air quality trends and existing air quality levels be analyzed. In addition, the California Clean Air Act (Assembly Bill 2595), necessitates the development of air quality policies and programs which will protect and preserve the environment and general public from harmful air pollutants.



## **AIR QUALITY GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Good regional air quality preserved and enhanced for the protection of the health and welfare of the community as a whole.

#### **Policy 1**

The City shall coordinate and cooperate with CVAG and SCAQMD in the on-going monitoring and management of major pollutants affecting the City and region, with particular focus on PM<sub>10</sub>, and shall provide all required reporting to be included in SCAQMD's annual report.

#### **Program 1 A**

Participate, through CVAG and SCAQMD, in the monitoring of all air pollutants of regional concern on a continuous basis, and maintain records of trends in regional air quality.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; CVAG; SCAQMD  
**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 1 B**

The City shall make available its Air Quality Management manual to encourage and facilitate self-regulation to the greatest extent practical. Coordinate with developers and encourage the phasing and staging of development to assure the lowest construction-related pollutant emission levels practical. The City shall impose mitigation measures, including the use of water trucks and temporary irrigation systems, as well as other measures which will effectively limit fugitive dust emissions resulting from construction or other site disturbance.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department  
**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

The General Plan Land Use Element shall be developed and maintained to locate air pollution point sources, such as manufacturing facilities, at an appropriate distance from residential areas and other sensitive receptors.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall promote the development of pedestrian-oriented retail centers, as well as community-wide multi-use trails and bike paths, dedicated bike lanes and other desirable alternatives to motor vehicle traffic.

#### **Policy 4**

The City shall promote the appropriate and cost-effective development and coordination of mass transit/shuttle service linking residential, shopping, resort and commercial centers of the City, and participate with CVAG, Southern California Association of Governments and public and private service providers to improve and optimize regional transportation services.

#### **Policy 5**

The City shall encourage the use of clean alternative energy sources for transportation, heating and cooling whenever practical.

#### **Program 5 A**

The City shall continue and expand the use of CNG and electric powered vehicles, as well as other alternative and/or renewable energy sources to the extent practical.

**Responsible Agency:** Administrative Services Department; Public Works Department  
**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 5 B**

Wherever practical, the City shall use cost effective alternative energy sources for transportation.

**Responsible Agency:** Administration; Public Works Department  
**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 6**

All development proposals brought before the City will be reviewed for potential adverse effects on air quality and will be required to mitigate any significant impacts.

#### **Program 6 A**

The City shall conduct an initial study and, as appropriate, require detailed air quality analyses for all applications which have the potential to adversely affect air quality.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department  
**Schedule:** Continuous.



### **Program 6 B**

Projects with the potential to generate significant levels of air pollutants, such as manufacturing facilities and site development operations, shall be required by the City to incorporate air pollution mitigation in their design and operation, and to utilize the most advanced technological methods feasible.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 6 C**

The City may monitor the effectiveness of transportation management programs of employers, which may include coordinated carpooling, off-peak shift times, employee flex-time and other components. As future demand warrants, promote and support the development of a Park-and-Ride program to decrease existing and future traffic levels within the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; SCAQMD

**Schedule:** Continuous.



# OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Open Space and Conservation Element is to address the need for the preservation of open space lands and to ensure the conservation, diverse development and utilization of energy and natural resources, including watersheds, wildlife habitat, mineral and scenic resources. These finite resources can be preserved and reclaimed, but as growth continues so too will the demand for energy and natural resources, as well as open space lands. This Element quantifies current (1997) energy usage, mineral resource location and identification, and open space lands. The Open Space and Conservation Element also identifies issues associated with energy, minerals, and open space, and provides approaches for conservation of these commodities.

It is the intent of this Element to define and establish open space and conservation areas, mineral resource zones, and existing energy resources and consumption patterns, in an effort to preserve and expand these important resources and determine how they may be most effectively managed. Policies and programs will serve as the tools to insure the preservation and management of these resources and discourage premature or inappropriate conversion of mineral resource zones, and open space and conservation lands to urban uses, thereby assuring their long-term viability and integration with regional open space resources.

## BACKGROUND

The broad and comprehensive nature of the issues and subjects of this Element relate directly and indirectly to many other Elements of this General Plan. The Land Use, Circulation, Scenic Highways, Parks and Recreation, Biological, Cultural Resources, Water Resources, and Seismic Safety Elements are directly related to the Open Space and Conservation issues addressed in this Element. The Land Use, Air Quality, and Circulation Elements directly relate to the Mineral Resource issues of this Element, and the Housing and Air Quality Elements have direct consequences

upon energy resources. This Element is oriented almost exclusively towards natural resources, with particular focus on conservation and open space lands, and mineral and energy resources. Its design is not only the assurance of continued availability of land for the production, use and conservation of energy and natural resources, but also for the enjoyment of scenic beauty and recreational uses.

Open space land is defined as any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space uses. These areas primarily include lands designated for the preservation of natural resources (plant and preserves, animal communities), rivers, washes and their banks, managed crop lands and mineral deposits, parks and recreational facilities, and areas where the presence or existence of hazardous conditions have prohibited development (Government Code Section 65560(b)).

The Open Space Lands Act (Government Code Section 65566) requires local governments to prepare open space plans before adopting required open space related zoning ordinances. The goal is to ensure that open space zoning remains consistent with the open space plan. The Act marked the first legislative signal in the open space movement and has remained practically unaltered since its original enactment in 1970. As defined within the Energy and Minerals Element, minerals are considered to be any naturally occurring chemical elements or compounds, formed from inorganic processes and organic substances, including, but not limited to iron, limestone, coal, peat, bituminous rock, sand and gravel, but excluding geothermal resources, natural gas and petroleum. The importance of mineral deposits and their utilization is dependent upon their relative abundance and importance in commerce and industry. Deposits of rare or important industrial materials require careful consideration before their availability is precluded by urban development.



In recent years, federal legislation has been passed to reduce intensity of human use and increase environmental protection to a large portion of the California desert. In recent years, Federal legislation has turned approximately eight million acres of the California desert into national parks and wilderness areas, a large portion of which is located in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Excavation of soil and mineral deposits within the area has been limited, and special permitting processes are being developed to review the impacts of each potential extraction of the mineral resources.

Energy resources are integral in residential, commercial and industrial land uses, and especially in transportation. Regional high energy costs, a highly competitive economic environment, and substantial opportunities for conservation encourage the development and use of alternative energy resources. The overall quality of air and health of communities and ecosystems are dependent upon sensible choices of energy production, use and conservation.

Government Code Section 65302(d) requires that General Plans include elements addressing issues of resource conservation, and sets forth the areas that may be addressed, including reclamation, prevention of pollution or resource degradation, and protection of watersheds.

## **Open Space Categories**

There are four types of open space categories described in this Element. Each type of open space contains its own set of issues regarding conservation.

### **I. Open Space for the Use of Outdoor Recreational Use**

An essential priority in the community design of the City is the investment in parks, community spaces, and open space and conservation areas. With an anticipated increase in the population of California, Riverside County, and the Desert Hot Springs region, it is necessary to plan for the preservation of valuable open space land. Open space within the City can provide relief from urban congestion, while creating opportunities for recreational activities, settings for public activities, as well as a place to gather in a more natural environment.

Open space areas for the use of outdoor recreation include those areas with outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including those accessible to washes; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space facilities. Examples of these lands include utility easements, steep terrain and mountainous areas, river, stream and wash beds and their banks, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

#### *Joshua Tree National Park*

Perhaps the largest and most well known park facility in the Desert Hot Springs area is the Joshua Tree National Park, which contains 794,000± acres administered by the National Park Service, and is located immediately north of the City. Access to Joshua Tree National Park can be found at the Long Canyon trailhead and trail. Hikers and equestrian riders can traverse the western portion of the park and reach the Black Rock Ranger Station in Yucca Valley. The Long Canyon Trailhead is located 0.6 miles north of Hacienda Boulevard in Long Canyon and provides parking for cars, horse trailers and handicapped parking.

#### *Big Morongo Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)*

The Big Morongo Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), generally located approximately one mile north of the City of Desert Hot Springs, is a desert oasis with perennial water flowing over three miles, supporting all types of riparian vegetation. Limited lands in the southeast portion of the ACEC are located within the City's sphere-of-influence. The ACEC is managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and was expanded in 1998 from 3,705 acres to 29,000± acres. In the preserve, visitors can find lush vegetation and water providing a rich habitat for various bird species, some of which are quite rare and unusual. Desert mammals, reptiles, and amphibians can also be found in this unique wilderness environment.

#### *Riverside County Ecological Park and Devil's Garden*

Within the City limits, west of Highway 62 are the Riverside County Ecological Park and the BLM's Devil's Garden area. The County's 320-acre holding is a state-owned site managed for the protection of rare plants and animals. This site is considered to provide important



opportunities for scientific research in desert ecology and habitat and species conservation (also see the Biological Resources Element).

The BLM and Devil's Garden Resource Area encompasses about three square miles within the City and boasts a unique mix of Sonoran and Mojave desert-type plants. This biological transition area supports important specimens of cacti, succulents and other plants, as well as sensitive bird, mammal and reptile species. The scenic qualities of this area are also outstanding.

#### *Other Open Spaces*

In addition to Joshua Tree National Park, the Big Morongo Preserve, and other surrounding public lands, the City of Desert Hot Springs also provides developed park facilities, including the Carl May Community Center facilities, Arroyo Park, Constitution Park, Corsini-Eastside Park, Hot Springs Park, Mission Springs Park, People's Park and Wardman Park. With scenic beauty as one of Desert Hot Springs' prime assets, it is important that residents have a park and open space system that will continue to grow and improve through time for current and future generations of residents.

The table below illustrates the acreage of open space in the City of Desert Hot Springs and its surrounding areas.



**Table IV-4  
Designated Open Space Lands  
City of Desert Hot Springs And General Plan Study Area\*  
Approximate Acres**

|                                                                                                                     | <b>Approx. Acres</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lands Designated Open Space/Mountain Reserve<br>(Designated OS/MR and not designated as parkland)                   | 5,316.0 acres        |
| Arroyo Park                                                                                                         | 3.97 acres           |
| Constitution Park                                                                                                   | .25 acres            |
| Corsini-Eastside Park                                                                                               | 21.02 acres          |
| Hot Springs Park                                                                                                    | 3.0 acres            |
| Mission Springs Park                                                                                                | 12.0 acres           |
| People's Park                                                                                                       | .5 acres             |
| Wardman Park                                                                                                        | 6.6 acres            |
| Undeveloped Park Lands                                                                                              | 175.36 acres         |
| <b>Total (Approximately)</b>                                                                                        | <b>5,538.7 acres</b> |
| <b>Open Space Lands</b>                                                                                             |                      |
| Riverside County Ecological Reserve                                                                                 | 240.0 acres          |
| Devil's Garden Area                                                                                                 | 1,840.0 acres        |
| Designated Private Open Space                                                                                       | 1,204.0 acres        |
| Open Space/Floodways                                                                                                | 8,360.0 acres        |
| <b>Additional Open Space Lands near the City of Desert Hot Springs</b>                                              |                      |
| Joshua Tree National Park                                                                                           | 794,000.0 acres      |
| Big Morongo Canyon Preserve (+ACEC**)                                                                               | 29,000.0 acres       |
| Coachella Valley Preserve                                                                                           | 17,076.0 acres       |
| Whitewater Preserve                                                                                                 | 1,175.0 acres        |
| Willow Hole/Edom Hill Preserve                                                                                      | 1,863.0 acres        |
| Total Coachella Valley Preserve                                                                                     | 20,114.0 acres       |
| * Other park facilities providing open space experiences are discussed further in the Parks and Recreation Element. |                      |
| **Area of Critical Environmental Concern                                                                            |                      |



### **Trails and Floodways**

Floodway channels and utility easements, serving as potential trails, can serve as public access links between open space areas, providing residents with alternate access. A significant opportunity for this type of floodway easement development exists in the Morongo and Mission Creek Flood Control Channels, as well as the Desert Hot Springs Channel and future Long Canyon flood control improvements (please see the Flooding and Hydrology, Parks & Recreation, and Circulation Elements for more detailed information).

## **II. Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources**

Open space for the preservation of natural resources encompasses an assortment of areas which are required to maintain biological diversity, to protect significant features, and to ensure that future generations will have access to natural environments. Conservation is defined as the management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect. Many finite and renewable resources are beginning to be depleted by population increases and development.

Natural resources can be categorized into two groups: renewable and finite. Renewable resources include fertile soils, forests, wildlife, water resources, washes, and scenic beauty. These resources can be refurbished by natural ecological cycles or sound management practices. Careful planning and management is necessary to ensure that these resources remain renewable. Finite resources include fossil fuels, nonmetallic and metallic minerals. These resources are those that when destroyed or consumptively used cannot be replaced. Finite resources must be used wisely in order to ensure their future availability. Although conservation may suggest the hoarding of natural resources for use at a later date, the aim of good conservation practices is to ensure a continuous yield of useful plants, animals, and materials by establishing a balanced cycle of harvest and renewal.

## **III. Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources**

While the most prevalent use of land is for residential, commercial and other development,

there are also economically productive uses for which rely on open land that is not overburdened with development.

Open space for the managed production of resources requires open areas which have not yet been urbanized, such as agricultural lands, areas containing major mineral deposits, areas of economic importance for the production of food, wind energy production areas, recreational uses, and areas required for the recharge of ground water basins and water storage.

## **IV. Open Space for Public Health and Safety**

An important function of open space is its use as a buffer to separate people and buildings from hazards which could cause injury, damage, or death. Open space for public health and safety includes areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions. These include earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality (Please see the Seismic Safety, Hydrology, Emergency Preparedness, fire and Police Protection, and Water Resources Element for more detailed information). Although these lands remain open due to hazardous situations, they have potential for other uses. Land along fault lines can be retained in its natural condition as a wildlife corridor, or used as developed open space, and flood control facilities may be usable for natural open space and recreation.



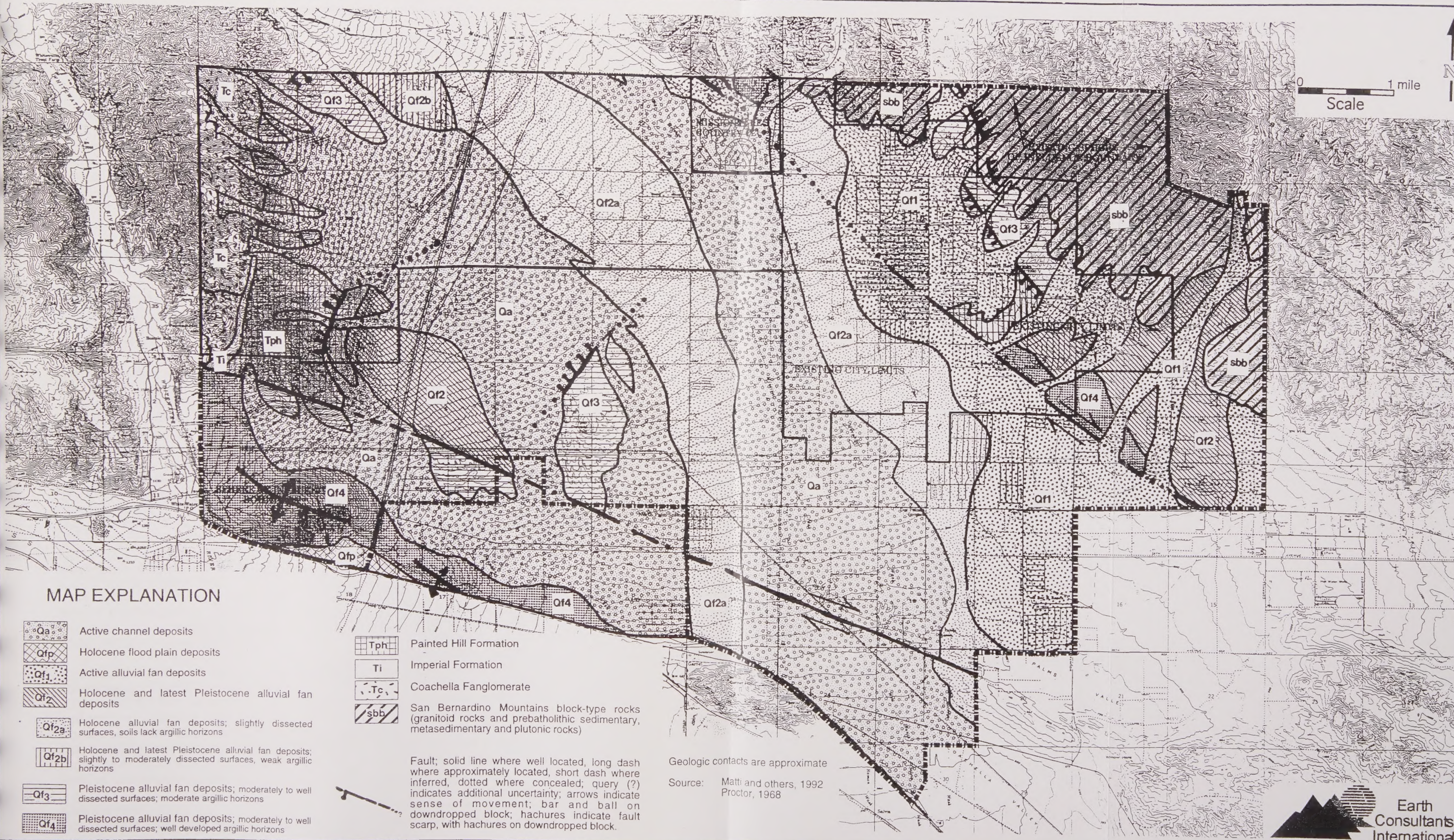
## MINERAL RESOURCES

Within the City of Desert Hot Springs and vicinity, there are relatively few mineral resources, as the majority of the area is made up of alluvial fans, containing mostly sand and gravel. More particularly, the soil composition of the area consists of active channel and recent (<11,000 years) floodplain deposits, and active alluvial fan deposits. Soils and bedrock also include older alluvial deposits, unique structures such as the Painted Hill Formation, and granitic plutonic rocks of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The sand and gravel deposits within the area do represent an important economic resource, used for roadbase and similar applications. Other mineral deposits occurring in the region include copper, limestone, specialty sands, and tungsten. These deposits are limited to rocky outcroppings occurring in the Little San Bernardino Mountains and have not been exploited.

Although none of the above mentioned minerals are listed as “strategic”, they are considered to be in short domestic supply by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, as sand and gravel are in high demand for road base and other building materials. Efforts should be made to monitor and preserve these resources, with the threat of significant negative environmental and aesthetic effects still prevalent. Exhibit IV-2 identifies the predominant soil types located within the City.





# MAP EXPLANATION

- Active channel deposits
- Holocene flood plain deposits
- Active alluvial fan deposits
- Holocene and latest Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits
- Holocene alluvial fan deposits; slightly dissected surfaces, soils lack argillic horizons
- Holocene and latest Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits; slightly to moderately dissected surfaces, weak argillic horizons
- Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits; moderately to well dissected surfaces; moderate argillic horizons
- Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits; moderately to well dissected surfaces; well developed argillic horizons

- Painted Hill Formation
- Imperial Formation
- Coachella Fonglomerate
- San Bernardino Mountains block-type rocks (granitoid rocks and prebatholithic sedimentary, metasedimentary and plutonic rocks)

Fault; solid line where well located, long dash where approximately located, short dash where inferred, dotted where concealed; query (?) indicates additional uncertainty; arrows indicate sense of movement; bar and ball on downdropped block; hachures indicate fault scarp, with hachures on downdropped block.

Geologic contacts are approximate

Source: Matti and others, 1992  
Proctor, 1968



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## CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS GENERAL PLAN

|                      |                                                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City Limits:         | —————                                                            |
| Sphere of Influence: |                                                                  |
| Date:                | 2/18/97                                                          |
| Base Map:            | Desert Hot Springs, and Seven Palms Valley<br>TSSS 7.5 Quad Maps |

Soil Types in  
Desert Hot Springs



Exhibit  
IV-2







## ENERGY RESOURCES

Riverside County has very limited fossil fuel resources, importing 90% of the fuel consumed from adjacent counties, states and foreign countries. The remaining 10% is supplied by small amounts of oil and natural gas produced from wells located in the Chino Hills and Prado Basin areas, and from solar and wind energy systems. With low local conventional resource levels and high consumption rates, conservation and the development and utilization of alternative energy sources are imperative.

### Renewable Energy

There are three major and potentially significant alternative energy resources within the Desert Hot Springs area, which are solar, wind and solid waste. The region has one of the highest insulation values in the United States and is the site of major solar energy installations. The San Geronimo Pass area is one of the world's most successful wind energy production sites, with the potential to generate up to 3,000 megawatts of electricity. Finally, solid waste, now largely deposited in landfills, is a potentially significant source of energy but is also associated with significant environmental constraints.

### Energy Services and Consumption

The City of Desert Hot Springs is a somewhat elevated desert community, with temperatures that are usually 5° to 7°F cooler than those on the valley floor. Temperatures occasionally exceed 120°F in the summer months, and sometimes drop below freezing during the desert winter nights. With somewhat milder year-round temperatures, compared to other desert communities, Desert Hot Springs residents still must factor substantial utility costs into their cost of living.

Precise figures on per capita or per household consumption of electricity and natural gas in the City of Desert Hot Springs are not available and vary significantly with use, however, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and utility companies have developed assumptions to define the general level of consumption of energy on a use basis.

### Gas Service

On average, the typical residential energy consumer uses approximately 6,665 cubic feet per unit per month of natural gas. Gas service is available to commercial, industrial and

residential users in the City, with costs varying with seasons and amount of use. Compressed natural gas is emerging as a cleaner-burning vehicular fuel and will be essential in fueling industrial development (Please see the Public Utilities Element for a more detailed discussion).

### Electrical Service

On average, the typical residential electric residence uses approximately 5,626 kilowatt-hours per year of electricity. Electrical services are provided in the Desert Hot Springs area by Southern California Edison (SCE). There are two substations that serve the City of Desert Hot Springs: the Coffee substation, located on Camino Aventura, west of Palm Drive, and the Devers substation, north of Dillon Road in the City's SOI. Every year, residential users are offered various rebates for the installation of energy efficient equipment. Several rebates offered by SCE include: refunds for the replacement of a "through-the-wall" heat pump; for the installation or replacement of a central electric air conditioner; for the replacement of a central electric heat pump; and for the replacement or retrofitting of a heat pump water heater, to name a few. In addition to providing electrical services to their customers, SCE has special rates for low income customers. (Please see the Public Utilities Element for a more detailed discussion).

### Alternative Energy

Desert Hot Springs has a high potential for wind and solar energy use, with year-round sunshine and intense summer heat providing an excellent setting for the use of this energy resource. Both residential and commercial uses in the City utilize solar heating systems to heat swimming pools, and to provide hot water, lighting, air conditioning and heating. Although the initial cost of installation is relatively high for solar systems, a 70% reduction in electricity bills can be realized for certain applications, with an average payback of 1.5 years for residential, and 2.5 for commercial. The most typical use of solar energy in the City is for domestic water heating. Desert Hot Springs's climate calls for flexibility in design and materials in order to allow for alternate energy systems and maximum energy conservation.



Windfarm development is already occurring in the City, its SOI and near the Gorgonio Pass. The energy resources available to accomplish useful work are conservation, solar, geothermal, wind, hydropower, oil, propane, gas and uranium. Conservation is a special energy resource because it is the prudent use of all natural and man-made resources. Conservation is considered to be reduced demand resulting from lifestyle and technological changes, waste-to-energy conversion, recycling, cogeneration, and waste reduction from efficient building and equipment design standards, transportation habits and land use design. All of these conservation methodologies should be encouraged in the City of Desert Hot Springs.

## LAND ACQUISITION

One way to ensure the development or preservation of natural resources is through the designation of open space. Open space can allow the land to be used for the good of the entire community while remaining largely undeveloped. To help conserve open space in California, many conservation programs and legislative enactments have been put into effect. These programs include the Conservation Easement Act, Open Space Easement Act of 1974, less-than-fee real property interests, and the Scenic Easement Deed Act.

*The Conservation Easement Act (Civil Code Sections 815-816)* enables a local government or a nonprofit organization to acquire continual easements for the conservation of agricultural and open space lands, and historic preservation. An agreement is made between the landowner and accepting agency as to the types of uses that can be permitted, which are then incorporated into the easement. The granting of a conservation easement may qualify as a charitable contribution for tax purposes or as an "enforceable restriction" for purposes of preferential assessment.

*The Open Space Easement Act of 1974 (Government Code Sections 51070-51097)* gives local governments the authority to accept easements granted to them or to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of conserving open space and agricultural lands.

State law facilitates preserving open space through a less-than-fee real property interest. This concept grants the land holder the right to

prevent certain land uses. Easements qualify as less-than-fee interests, and are often used because they are less expensive than the purchase of full fee rights, can be more effective than zoning, do not displace, and often yield tax advantages to property owners. Local agencies may obtain these easements by purchase, exaction, or gift.

*The Scenic Easement Deed Act (Government Code Sections 6950-6954)* authorizes a local government to purchase fee or scenic easements, but there is no special mechanism for obtaining them. Land uses are regulated by the Act enabling local governments to adopt an ordinance for the purpose of establishing open space covenants with property owners.

A City may acquire real property rights in other various ways. The City of Desert Hot Springs may wish to consider additional acquisition methods such as acquisition of fee simple absolute interests, joint acquisition, and land swapping, which are discussed in the General Plan EIR.

### Public Land Trusts

A public land conservation trust is another type of vehicle devoted to protecting open space, agricultural lands, wildlife habitats, and natural resource lands. Land trusts achieve their objectives primarily through acquiring and managing interests in land.

Land conservation trusts preserve open space and resource lands in a variety of ways. Some use their funds to acquire fee simple interest in real estate and then manage or lease back their holdings. Others purchase conservation easements which protect sensitive land from development while allowing owners to sell their remaining property interests to whomever they please.

One such entity, the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, was established by the California Legislature in 1990 to acquire and hold in trust open space in the mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley. Working in coordination and cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies, the Conservancy has assisted in the protection of over 13,000 acres in the Coachella Valley mountain areas between 1991 and 1997.



Together these entities have also developed a conservation strategy to protect the mountains for present and future use. The Mountains Conservancy is assisted by the Friends of the Desert Mountains, a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to preservation efforts ranging from fundraising to habitat restoration.

Since they are less fettered by red tape, private land trusts are usually able to respond more quickly than governmental entities to sudden and fleeting purchasing opportunities. They also use their real estate experience to help public agencies with the mechanics of acquisition. Both private and public land trusts help to preserve environmentally sensitive open space and conservation lands, pursue state and federal financing with grants and loans, and other assistance mechanisms for the preservation of open space.

### **Other Recreational Assets**

Within the City and its sphere-of-influence, other recreational assets occur which include both public and private lands. Golf courses include: Desert Dunes Golf Course is a unique and challenging 174-acre, 18-hole championship Robert Trent Jones Golf Course, Mission Lakes Golf Course, also an 18-hole championship course, providing challenging mountain holes, and Sands Mobile Country Club, a 9-hole executive golf course. In the Mission Creek area, the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area comprises of 37,980 acres of BLM-managed land located northwest of the City, and provides protection of important biological resources. This wilderness is part of the eastern slope of the San Bernardino Mountains with topography rapidly changing from low, rolling foothills and canyons to steep, rugged mountains. Elevations range from 2,300 to 5,500 feet. Because of this elevation gradient, the wilderness reflects a unique transition between desert, coastal and mountain environments.

### **Funding Mechanisms**

Viable funding mechanisms will be essential to finance the acquisition of open space and may include state general obligation bonds, tax increment financing, and grants. In addition to the funding mechanisms mentioned, the Legislature has helped organizations create a broad range of categorical grant and loan

programs that can help to finance open space and make its acquisition more economically feasible for smaller communities, including:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund/Department of Parks and Recreation
- Habitat Conservation Program/Department of Parks and Recreation
- Simms Trail Bill/Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Public Access Program/Department of Fish and Game
- Wildlife Conservation Board Program/Department of Fish and Game.
- Urban Forestry Program/California Department of Forestry

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City of Desert Hot Springs is located in a natural setting where snow-capped mountains and dramatic scenery, blue skies and clean air provide a high quality of life for its residents and visitors. In order to continue this residential resort lifestyle during future years of increased development, open space will need to be maintained and preserved for future generations.

The thoughtful implementation of the City General Plan, Development Code and other regulatory mechanisms will play an essential role in preserving existing open space and conservation areas. They will also assure that continued development does not adversely impact these areas and may provide opportunities and mechanisms for long-term conservation of lands not currently under the City's control.

The City can also play an important role in encouraging the creation of nonprofit conservation groups and assist in securing open space lands for long-term preservation. Assistance may also be provided in helping to secure state and federal grants for purchase of conservation easements and/or fee simple ownership interest. The ongoing efforts of the City and private interests can add to the conservation and preservation of one of the communities most valuable assets, its natural resources and open space lands.

The nonrenewable character of mineral deposits requires their careful evaluation and preservation to prevent unnecessary waste



and/or exploitation. The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 was passed to identify and protect mineral resources in areas of high land used conflict and to insure the reclamation of mined lands. Additionally, Government Code Section 65302(d) states that for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, the location, quantity and quality of rock, sand and gravel resources shall be identified. The state has already identified the majority of mineral resources within the Desert Hot Springs area. Public Resources Code Section 2762 indicates that mineral resource management policies shall be developed to establish the importance of the minerals to the market region. Desert Hot Springs' compliance with these mandates will assure that adequate supplies of such resources will be available to meet the future needs of the City, County and region.

Steadily increasing economic and environmental costs associated with energy production and use are forcing communities and countries to develop new energy policies and programs. The various constraints that have emerged can also be viewed as opportunities for economic development and environmental enhancement. Lowering demand will help to control costs. Encouraging development and use of alternative and renewable energy can expand economic opportunity. The community has an important and meaningful role in the encouragement of the wise use of energy resources.

The following goals, policies and programs provide the basis for the long-term viability of this important component of the community.

## **OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

Conservation, preservation and management of open space areas and protection of environmental resources and threatened animal species, protection against environmental hazards, and provision of enhanced recreational opportunities, and scenic qualities of the City.

### **GOAL 2**

Preservation of the City's desert atmosphere, including maintenance of natural and scenic resources.

#### **Policy 1**

Identify and map designated and generally assigned lands suitable for preservation as passive and active open space areas, including parks, trails, and open space resources.

#### **Program 1 A**

Confer and coordinate with other responsible agencies to map and periodically update information on the various open space lands and facilities within the City and immediate vicinity.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Engineer; Community Services Department; Bureau of Land Management; State Department of Fish and Game; Riverside County Flood Control

**Schedule:** Implement initial mapping in 2001-02 Fiscal year; Continuous; every two years.

#### **Policy 2**

Where appropriate, incorporate identified hazard zones (earthquake fault lines, floodways and floodplains, steep and unsuitable slopes, etc.) into the land use map, designating these areas as public or private open space.

#### **Program 2 A**

Identify and assess areas of the community appropriate for preservation as public or private, passive and active open space. On-going consideration shall be given to future inclusion into the City Open Space and Conservation system.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Commission; City Council; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous; minimum every five years.

#### **Policy 3**

With the cooperation and approval of the local utilities and service providers and County Flood Control Districts, the City shall maximize use of flood control and utility easement areas to develop a multi-use trail system to and through parks and open space areas.



### **Program 3 A**

Confer and coordinate with the County Flood Control District and utility purveyors to, as practical, integrate a multiple use trail system that links City parks and open space and conservation areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County Flood Control; and public utility purveyors

**Schedule:** 2001-02, Continuous.

### **Policy 4**

Prepare and implement design and development guidelines and regulations that assure provision of appropriate buffers between urban lands and open space/conservation areas.

### **Program 4 A**

Establish land use and development guidelines and regulations in the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance which ensure the integration of appropriate buffers between urban land uses and open space and conservation areas.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2000-01, Continuous.

### **Policy 5**

Adopt amendments to the Zoning Ordinance which encourage the provision of open space areas through flexible development standards.

### **Program 5 A**

The City shall support and, as appropriate, work with the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy to preserve environmentally sensitive open space and conservation lands and to provide a mechanism for gifts and bequests of land to the trust.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Commission; City Council; Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy; CVAG; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous.

### **Program 5 B**

The City shall cooperate and participate with the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy in pursuing private funding as well as state and federal grants, loans and other assistance for acquisition, preservation and management of open space and conservation lands.

**Responsible Agency:** Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy; City Community Development Department; CVAG

**Schedule:** 2001-02, Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

The City shall assure a Development Code which encourages the provision of open space areas through flexible development standards.

### **Program 6 A**

Ordinances and other appropriate regulations shall be amended to assure the provision of flexible development policies, standards, and guidelines, that encourage the provision of quality open space amenities within new residential subdivisions and planned developments.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Commission; City Council; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 7**

The City shall adopt a comprehensive grading ordinance that will protect and conserve open space and natural resources to the greatest extent practical (also see Geotechnical Element).

### **Program 7 A**

The City shall develop and adopt a comprehensive grading ordinance that protects hillsides and other open space and natural resource conservation areas sensitive in terms of topography and visibility, wildlife resources, water or mineral resources and air quality.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; City Planning Commission; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous



# ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this element is to address the need for thoughtful use and management of energy and mineral resources, diverse development and conservation. Minerals and most energy resources are finite and limited. The household demand for energy resources in Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley is relatively high and escalating energy prices have placed serious burdens on residents and businesses alike. This element sets forth goals, policies and programs that respond to the community's dependency on these limited resources. Resource production, transmission and use issues are also set forth in the element, as are the major opportunities faced by the city and regional governments for more local control of these resources.

Current (1997) energy usage, mineral resource location and identification are quantified in this element. Mineral resource zones and existing energy resources and consumption patterns are defined and established in an effort to preserve and expand these important resources and determine how they can be most effectively managed. Policies and programs serve as tools to insure the preservation and management of these resources and discourage premature or inappropriate conversion of mineral and/or energy resources zones to incompatible uses.

## BACKGROUND

The Energy and Mineral Resources Element is directly related to several other elements, including Land Use, Open Space and Conservation, Circulation, Air Quality, Housing, Economic Development, as well as other elements. A wide range of state and federal legislation and regulation are applicable to energy and mineral resource issues, including California Government Code Section 65560(b), which directs cities and counties to provide for the preservation of energy and mineral resource areas, as well as other resources. As discussed below, these requirements have direct application to the City and its Sphere-of-Influence, where important mineral

and energy resources have already been identified and developed. Government Code Section 65302(d) requires that General Plans include elements that address issues of resource conservation, and sets forth the areas that may be addressed, including reclamation, prevention of resource degradation and preservation for long-term use.

The regulation of mineral resources is also extensively addressed in the Public Resources Code, including Sections 2762, 2763 and 2764. Government Code Section 65303 allows the local jurisdiction to add other resource conservation/management subjects that, in its opinion, relate to the physical development of the City.

The State Solar Rights Act and Solar Shade Control Act, meant to enhance opportunities for the use of solar energy, and Title 24 building standards, provided to reduce unnecessary energy use in new or substantially remodeled construction, are some of the state regulations affecting mineral and energy resources. These and the above referenced code sections may be incorporated into the General Plan.

Minerals are considered to be any naturally occurring chemical elements or compounds formed from inorganic processes and organic substances, including iron, sand and gravel, limestone, coal and peat, but not including natural gas or petroleum. The importance of mineral deposits and their utilization is dependent upon their relative abundance and importance in commerce and industry. Deposits of rare or important industrial materials require careful consideration before their availability is precluded by urban development.

Energy resources are integral in residential, commercial and industrial land uses, and especially in transportation. Relatively high regional energy costs, a highly competitive economic environment, and substantial opportunities for conservation encourage the development and use of alternative energy



resources. The overall quality of our air and the health of our ecosystems are dependent upon sensitive choices of energy production, use and conservation.

Located in an area with high mean annual temperatures, Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley have a substantial need for air conditioning and related electrical energy demand. To a lesser extent, the Valley also consumes large quantities of natural gas for space heat and hot water for homes and businesses, to provide industrial process heat, and to prepare food.

### Energy Resource Consumption

Consumption of electricity and natural gas per capita or per household in the Coachella Valley are estimates and vary significantly with use. However, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), in cooperation with utilities, has developed a set of assumptions to define the general level of energy consumption on a use basis. Residential energy users, the City's largest consumer segment, on average utilize approximately 79,000 cubic feet of natural gas, and 6,000 kilowatt hours (KWH) per household per year.

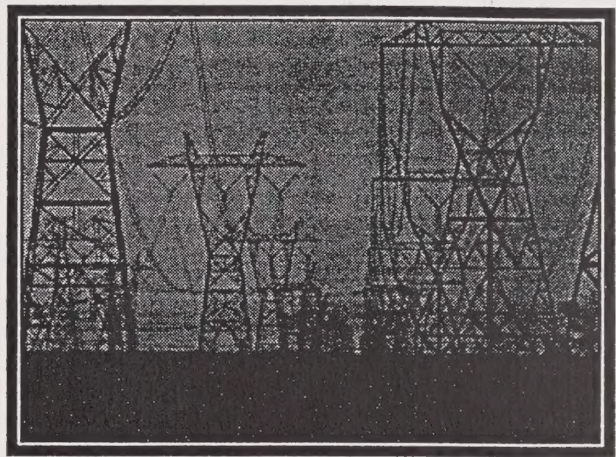
With the minor exception of electrical energy being generated from nuclear and renewable resources, non-renewable fossil fuels are depended upon for the generation of electricity and the heating of homes. Also important, the operation of vehicles is still essentially dependent upon non-renewable resources. In addition to reducing the long-term availability of these important resources, the burning of fossil fuels is directly associated with the production of air pollutants, hazardous waste materials and global warming.

### ELECTRIC POWER SERVICES

The availability of cost-competitive electrical power is essential to the community in attracting new residents, business and industry. The cost of electricity can have a substantial impact on business, and its affordability through reasonable rates, load management and energy conservation incentives is essential to the continued growth of the Desert Hot Springs business and industrial sectors. The impact of the high cost of electrical energy is further

compounded by air conditioning needs during summer months. In Desert Hot Springs, electric power services are provided by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE). Electricity is transmitted to the City primarily through high voltage lines and step-down transformers at substations located in the City's SOI. Currently, there is no power generation within the City, with the exception of a single 160-acre wind farm and stand-by generators located at City Hall and the Carl May Community Center.

### Southern California Edison



SCE is the primary electric service provider in the City and Sphere planning areas. High voltage transmission lines deliver power to the Devers substation in the City's sphere-of-influence, north of Dillon Road, and the Coffee Substation, located on Camino Aventura, west of Palm Drive, where power is stepped down and distributed through lower voltage lines. Individual homes and businesses then receive power through a final transformer which brings voltages down to useful levels.

Residential users are offered a variety of rebates for the installation of energy efficient equipment. Several rebates offered by SCE include: refunds for the replacement of "through-the-wall" heat pumps; the installation or replacement of a central electric air conditioner; the replacement of central electric heat pumps; and the replacement of heat pump water heaters, to name a few. Another program called Automatic Power Shift allows substantial savings from June through September, in



exchange for allowing SCE to remotely cycle-off selected air conditioning units during peak period of heavy use and potential power outages.

## NATURAL GAS SERVICE

Natural gas is found in association with petroleum crude oil deposits and is transported throughout the country through high pressure transmission lines. It is generally considered a clean and efficient fuel, but nonetheless emits a wide range of air pollutants. On average, the typical household uses approximately 6,600 cubic feet of natural gas per dwelling unit per month. Gas service is available to commercial, industrial and residential users in the City, with costs varying with seasons and amount of use. Natural gas has also been adopted as the fuel of choice by the Sunline Transit Authority, which now operates its entire fleet on compressed natural gas (CNG). The City has also added CNG-powered vehicles to its fleet. College of the Desert has even added an educational certificate program in the repair and maintenance of CNG vehicles, providing the first such college-level certification in California.

The General Plan study area is located within the service district of the Southern California Gas Company (The Gas Company). The Gas Company has by far the most sophisticated and detailed technical assistance and incentive program of all energy service providers serving the City. Service planners and technical expertise from the Gas Company's various service divisions are available to assist in addressing a wide range of use issues, including land use master planning, service extension and use-specific technical consulting/problem-solving. A brief summary of the various services available from the Gas Company are provided below.

### Gas Company Energy Management Programs

A wide range of energy management, conservation and equipment retrofit programs have been developed by The Gas Company for its customer base. These programs include core nonresidential customer equipment rebates up to 20% of the cost of qualifying equipment. To maximize energy efficiency and cost-effective

equipment purchases and operations, assistance in facilities planning and analysis is also provided. The Gas Company's Air Quality Assistance Program provides detailed information on current and anticipated air quality requirements and helps users through the regulatory compliance maze, including the permitting process. Business partnerships are also facilitated, with an Export Hotline and market research. The Gas Company also helps in the development of new technologies and process solutions primarily for industrial customers.

## LOCAL RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES



Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley have substantial and important renewable energy resources, which include abundant sunshine and high temperatures, and the San Gorgonio Wind Resource Area in the vicinity of the San Gorgonio Pass and extending into the City and its Sphere-of-Influence. A proven energy resource area is the west end of the City; approximately 160 acres of windfarm development is located in the City and extensive windfarm development occurs in the west sphere area.

In the early 1980s wind energy development started in the San Gorgonio Pass area. It was originally regulated by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the County of Riverside. During the mid-1990s the City of Desert Hot Springs and the City of Palm Springs both annexed windfarms into their incorporated areas. The San Gorgonio Wind Resource Study and subsequent analysis delineate those portions of the wind resource area that offer an economically viable (developable) wind resource.



The cost of wind-generated electricity is now equal to or lower than electricity generated by coal or natural gas. It is generally conceded that the true costs of energy from fossil or nuclear fuels are not yet fully factored into their market price. The performance of commercial-scale turbine development in the city and western sphere area would appear to indicate the viability of additional City and SOI lands for future commercial-scale wind turbine development.

### **Solar Energy**

The costs of producing and installing solar photovoltaic systems, which involve the direct conversion of sunshine to electricity, have been dramatically reduced in recent years but are still primarily used for special applications, including powering remote locations. Solar thermal systems have meanwhile been in use all over the world for many years and are widely applied in the Coachella Valley to provide domestic hot water and to heat swimming pools. Passive solar designs are also being used to provide natural lighting and space heating. Desert Hot Springs is well situated to take advantage of the continued emergence and refinement of solar technologies, with intense solar insolation for both solar thermal and photovoltaic systems. These technologies are also expected to become integral to the emergence of a hydrogen fuel cycle, which could result in virtually pollution-free electric power and combustion fuel.

### **Geothermal Energy**

Geothermal resources are also in plentiful supply in Desert Hot Springs. The City of Desert Hot Springs primarily developed to take advantage of the naturally occurring hot mineral water which exists in this localized area. The geothermal hot springs are structurally controlled by faults and occur in three known water-bearing strata or aquifers. The lowermost aquifer is generally the most prolific and yields the hottest water. Water temperatures in the aquifers range from 77° F to 200° F, with water depth ranging from 16 feet to 340 feet. Geothermal resources are largely focused along the Mission Creek fault.

Geothermal energy in Desert Hot Springs is used primarily for commercial spas and therapeutic pools, and may have limited potential for space heating and domestic hot water.

### **MINERAL RESOURCES**

The nonrenewable character of mineral deposits requires their careful and efficient development to prevent unnecessary waste or exploitation. The excavation of mineral resources can also have significant environmental impacts that may only be marginally mitigated by surface mining reclamation plans. Evidence of mining, particularly surface mining in desert areas, can remain for centuries if not properly reclaimed through extensive importing of fill, grading, and replanting.

In the Coachella Valley, the deep fault-controlled valley has filled in with eroded materials from the surrounding hills and mountains to a depth of thousands of feet within the planning area. As a consequence, the mineral resources of the desert floor are largely limited to sands and gravels. Important deposits of these materials occur within the region and are actively being developed, although none are located within the City or its SOI. Other mineral deposits occurring in the region include copper, limestone, specialty sands, and tungsten. These deposits are limited to rocky outcroppings occurring in the Little San Bernardino Mountains and have not been exploited.

### **Locally Important Mineral Resources**

In 1988, the State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology released a report identifying aggregate materials in the Palm Springs Production-Consumption Region, which includes the City and its sphere-of-influence. The primary goal of the study was to identify regionally significant mineral deposits in an effort to conserve and develop them, in order to meet anticipated aggregate production needs of the region.



Three mineral resource categories are applicable to the City and its sphere-of-influence:

- MRZ-1:** Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.
- MRZ-2:** Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists.
- MRZ-3:** Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.

As shown on state mineral resources maps, an area of MRZ-1 is identified in the hills west of Whitewater Canyon. MRZ-2 zones occur at Little Morongo Canyon just north of the City and its SOI, and along the Whitewater River floodplain approximately 1 mile west of the SOI, which coincides with the operation of two active aggregate quarries. A full range of aggregate products is supplied by these plants. The remaining area of the Sphere-of-Influence is in the MRZ-3 zone.

The conclusions of the state study indicate that existing aggregate resources will only meet 43 percent of the aggregate demand in the Palm Springs Production-Consumption Region over the next 50 years. This may necessitate the establishment of new resources for mining or utilization of alternative resources.

While sand and gravel for aggregate and decorative stone are the only mineral commodities currently being produced in the Desert Hot Springs area, small deposits of limestone, gold and copper have been explored in the past. Two small deposits of copper minerals were staked out in West Blind Canyon in 1954. One is the Cactus Hill mine, a 20-foot horizontal mine shaft; the other, a mile southwest, is called the Indian Copper mine, a 50-foot vertical shaft. Both mines are inactive.

Local residents report that a vein-quartz gold mine called the Hager-Kale mine was worked prior to 1911. The mine has not been located according to the State of California Division of Mines and Geology (1960), but an approximate location is shown to be one mile east of the mouth of Long Canyon.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Steadily increasing economic and environmental costs associated with energy production and use are forcing communities and countries to develop new energy policies and programs. The various constraints that have emerged can also be viewed as opportunities for economic development and environmental enhancement. Lowering or shifting demand will help to control costs and require power generators to operate more efficiently and price their product more competitively. Encouraging the development and use of alternative and renewable energy can also expand economic opportunity.

The community has an important and meaningful role in encouraging the wise use of energy resources. The City also has an important long-term role in helping assure the availability of important sand and gravel resources located in the Sphere. Future resource needs must be kept in mind when land use or development planning has the potential to adversely affect these important mineral and energy resources.

## **ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Conservation and thoughtful management of energy sources and mineral deposits, assuring the long-term viability of limited and non-renewable resources.

#### **Policy 1**

Promote energy conservation in all areas of community development, including transportation, development planning, public and private sector office construction and operation, as well as in the full range of residential, commercial and industrial projects.



### **Program 1 A**

Participate in the energy management and conservation efforts of Sunline Transit Authority and encourage the expanded use of compressed natural gas, buses with bike racks, and other system improvements which enhance overall energy conservation.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Sunline Transit; CVAG

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 1 B**

Plan for and facilitate the development of a Citywide and regional bike path system to provide visitors and residents with non-vehicular alternatives for travel to work, convenience shopping, and recreating.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; CVAG; RCTC

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 2**

The General Plan and other community plans shall assure an efficient circulation system and land use pattern in the City, which minimizes travel.

### **Program 2 A**

Community land use and transportation planning and design shall assure the provision of convenient neighborhood shopping, medical and other professional services appropriately located to minimize travel and facilitate the use of alternative means of transportation.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** 2001-02, Continuous.

### **Policy 3**

Major mixed use developments, which provide significant employment centers, shall be required to provide convenient and safe access to the public transit system.

### **Policy 4**

Pro-actively support the affordable and reliable production and delivery of electrical power to the community.

### **Program 4 A**

Investigate and pursue the various options available to influence or directly manage the purchasing and/or distribution of electrical power to the various segments of the community, including regular consultation with SCE, and the possible participation in a public power authority.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; City Council

**Schedule:** 2001-02

### **Policy 5**

Support public and private efforts to develop and operate alternative systems of thermal and electrical production, which take advantage of local renewable resources.

### **Program 5 A**

Assign land use and zoning designations to appropriate lands in the City's wind resource area to allow and facilitate their development as windfarms to the extent practical, consistent with the City's standards.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; CVAG; RCTC

**Schedule:** Upon annexation.

### **Program 5 B**

Support and facilitate the integration of co-generation and other energy management systems into larger industrial and commercial operations in the City to enhance operational efficiencies and provide additional opportunities for local power production.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; SCE; So. Cal Gas

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 5 C**

To the extent practical, monitor and regulate development in the vicinity of significant mineral resources occurring within the City, its Sphere-of-Influence and the vicinity.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works

**Schedule:** Continuous.







# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER V**

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS**

This chapter of the General Plan addresses those man-made and natural environmental hazards which occur in the City of Desert Hot Springs and surrounding areas. General Plan elements discussed under this chapter include Geotechnical, Flooding and Hydrology, Noise, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials. The assessment of and planning for these hazards or constraints is the primary purpose of this chapter of the General Plan.







# GEOTECHNICAL ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Geotechnical Element is to provide information, as well as goals, policies and programs to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the City from seismic and other geotechnical hazards, and to educate the community and its residents about seismic and related geologic hazards. The Element is also meant to satisfy the requirements of state law, including the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (amended). The Element and its supporting documentation are also intended to provide a regularly updated information database on geotechnical hazards affecting the region, which will serve as the basis for on-going land use policies and decisions.

## BACKGROUND

A wide range of other General Plan elements that are directly or indirectly related to the Geotechnical Element, including Land Use, Emergency Preparedness, Circulation, Housing, Public Utilities, Economic Development, and Public Buildings and Facilities. The Emergency Preparedness Element of the General Plan is one most directly related to the seismic safety issues embodied in the element. Many of the procedures, plans, programs and policies in that element are logical extensions of the Geotechnical Element. In this regard, the Flooding and Hydrology and Fire and Police Protection Elements are also closely related to seismic and geotechnical safety.

The City of Desert Hot Springs and the General Plan study area are located at the northwestern extreme of the Salton Trough, which is the landward extension of the East Pacific Rise spreading ridge and transform fault system. This spreading ridge is creating new crust and is responsible for separating Baja California from mainland Mexico and creating the Gulf of California and the Imperial and Coachella Valleys. This spreading action is also responsible for moving the Pacific Plate to the northwest relative to the North American Plate at the rate of about 50 mm per year. Movement along these two tectonic plates is responsible

for the earthquakes that occur in Southern California, with about 70 percent of this movement being accommodated by the San Andreas Fault Zone.

The General Plan study area straddles two physiographic provinces; the valley floor in the north are part of the Colorado Desert province, and the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains being in the Transverse Range physiographic province. The valley floor is a tectonic (fault controlled) depression that began forming about 5 million years ago and in the study area has been filled with nearly 5,000 feet of sediment (some of marine origin) washed down from surrounding mountains. In the vicinity of the US/Mexico border this spreading and sediment infilling is up to 40,000 feet deep.

## Applicable Legislation

The California General Plan Guidelines and a wide range of other requirements for the development of an element addressing seismic safety issues are found in both the California Government Code and Public Resources Code. Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that the General Plan address the need to protect the community from unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, seiching, dam failure, subsidence and other known geologic hazards. In accordance with Government Code Section 65303, the City General Plan may also address other subjects related to the physical development of the community, as provided through Flooding and Hydrology, Emergency Preparedness and other Elements of this Plan.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act is considered the most important piece of legislation related to this Element and is found in Public Resources Code Sections 2621 et. seq. The location of these study zones must be disclosed to the general public through the use of maps and other appropriate materials (Title 14, California Administrative Code Section 3603 (b)).



establishes a program by which the City and all other jurisdictions located within seismic zone 4, as set forth in Chapter 2-23 of Part 2 of Title 24 of the Administrative Code, shall identify all potentially hazardous or substandard buildings and shall establish a program for the mitigation of these buildings' inadequacies.

### **Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act**

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (previously known as the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act adopted in 1972), was developed with the primary purpose of mitigating the hazards associated with fault rupture by prohibiting the location of structures for human occupancy across the trace of an active fault. Earthquake fault zones, which are sufficiently active and well-defined, have been designated on maps prepared by the State Division of Mines and Geology. Study area boundaries range from 200 to 500 feet on either side of an active fault, depending on whether it is a minor or major fault. The Act defines active faults as those that have evidenced movement during the past 11,000 years (Holocene epoch).

The City is also required by the Act to withhold the issuance of development permits within an active fault zone until geologic investigations are conducted that demonstrate that sites are not threatened by surface displacement from future faulting. The Coachella Valley Segment of the San Andreas Fault Zone (also known as the Mission Creek Fault) passes through the southwestern quadrant of the urban core of the City. It extends through the SOI from the Desert Crest Mobilehome Park in the southeast, and through the Mission Lakes Country Club development in the north-central portion of the planning area (see Exhibit V-1: Faults in the Desert Hot Springs General Plan Area). The Banning Fault is located in the City's southern SOI and passes very near the extreme southwest corner of the city limits. These faults and others with the potential to cause damage in the City are discussed further below.

### **Geotechnical Conditions in the Desert Hot Springs Region**

Located along one of the most active tectonic boundaries on the globe, the Coachella Valley and Southern California region is susceptible to a wide range of hazards associated with geotechnical conditions. Recent analysis indicates that far too few earthquakes have occurred in Southern California in the last 200 years to account for the rate of movement between the Pacific and North American plates. The data suggest that the region will be subject to either numerous, moderate earthquakes (such as the Northridge quake) or a few larger (Magnitude 7.2 or larger) earthquakes. Therefore, the City and the region must factor in these geologic threats in the development of appropriate policies and programs.

### **Geologic Units, Basement Rocks, Alluvium and Sand**

In addition to the tectonic forces acting on the Desert Hot Springs area, geologic hazards and geotechnical constraints are also affected by the characteristics of the rocks and sediments that underlie the area. The majority of the planning area consists of active channel deposits, Holocene (within the last 11,000 years) flood plain deposits and active alluvial fan deposits, which extend from the San Bernardino foothills south to Interstate-10 and east to the canyons and foothills of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Older geologic units in the Planning Area include Holocene surficial sediments deposited on the valley floor, Holocene and Late Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits and Pleistocene deposits.

The prevailing alluvial sediments are underlain by a thick section of semi-consolidated and consolidated sedimentary rock of terrestrial and marine origin. The semi-consolidated units are exposed primarily in the western portion of the Planning Area, forming the flanks of Whitewater Hill and Painted Hills. Basement rock in the area north of the San Andreas Fault Zone is expected to be the same as that making up the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains. Basement rock south of the zone is expected to be common with that of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains.



Sediments that cover the valley floor can be classified as either stream-deposited (alluvium), or wind-deposited (aeolian). The windblown or aeolian deposits typically consist of reworked alluvium, which have been picked up by strong winds and redistributed as silty, fine and medium-grained sands that now form sand dunes and sand fields. A thick accumulation of these windblown sands has formed a broad, elongated and southeast trending ridge in the southeast part of the planning area, along the vegetation scarp formed by the Banning Fault. This elevated dune system extends southeast into Willow Hole, and rises as much as 130 feet above the surrounding desert floor.

The valley floor deposits are underlain by consolidated and semi-consolidated sedimentary rock, which are in turn underlain by bedrock similar to that exposed in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains. The only exposed semi-consolidated sedimentary unit is the Ocotillo Conglomerate, which can be seen on Edom Hill and Flat-top Mountain, where it has been uplifted as a result of movement along the Banning Branch and Garnet Hill Faults. In the Edom Hill area, the Ocotillo Conglomerate is approximately 2,400 feet thick.

Portions of the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains located within the Planning Area are comprised primarily of 6 to 12 million year old deposits of the Painted Hills formation and the Imperial formation which is of marine origin. Bedrock consists of distorted schists and gneisses intruded by granitoid rock, which has become fractured and jointed, weakening these rocks and contributing to potential seismic hazards. A more detailed discussion of the engineering characteristics of these various geologic units can be found in the General Plan Program EIR and the geotechnical report found in the EIR appendices.

### **Measurements of the Seismic Hazards in Desert Hot Springs**

Earthquakes are classified by their magnitude and by their intensity. The intensity of seismic ground shaking is a function of several factors, including the magnitude of the quake, distance from the epicenter, and the local geologic and topographic conditions. Analysis of the San Andreas Fault (Banning and Mission Creek Faults) earthquake potential indicates that in a major seismic event the City generally lies

within intensity zones IX through XI, as defined in the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (see below). This intensity range can result in partial or complete collapse of typical masonry buildings, heavy or total destruction of frame buildings and their foundations, serious to complete destruction of underground pipelines, bending of rail lines, land and rock slides, and damage or destruction of bridges and overpasses.

The largest or maximum credible earthquake a fault is capable of generating is used for community planning purposes. Maximum seismic design parameter values, including peak ground or bedrock acceleration, duration of strong ground shaking, and period of ground motion (frequency), are derived from maximum credible earthquakes to establish safety margins. These potential effects associated with local faults are discussed below.

### **Richter Scale**

The breakage of bedrock and overlying sediments along tectonic plate boundaries is generally termed faulting and ground rupture, are associated with ground acceleration or motion and are the most significant potential geotechnical hazards affecting the General Plan study area. Earthquakes are typically defined by their magnitude as measured on the Richter Scale. Each whole number step in magnitude on the scale represents a ten-fold increase in the amplitude of the waves on a seismogram and about a 31-fold increase in energy released. As an example, a 7.5 Richter magnitude earthquake is 31 times more powerful than a 6.5 magnitude (Richter) quake.

### **Seismic Intensity and the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale**

The Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale (MMIS) is a more useful measure of the damage potential of earthquakes, and is based upon people's reactions to a quake, and observed damage to structures and other physical effects. There are twelve levels of intensity in this scale, ranging from I (tremor not felt) to XII (damage is nearly total). The effects of a quake on masonry and other buildings are an important part of characterizing the intensity using this scale.



## **Major Active Faults and Their Potential Effects in the Desert Hot Springs Area**

Earthquakes can cause substantial property damage, the loss of public services and facilities and loss of life. Strong shaking from an earthquake can result in landslides, ground lurching, structural damage or destruction, and liquefaction. Strong shaking can also set in motion other hazards, including fires, disruption of essential facilities and systems (water, sewer, gas, electric, transportation, communications, irrigation and drainage systems), releases of hazardous materials, and flood inundation as a result of dam or water tank failure.

During an earthquake ground rupture and ground shaking are the most significant seismic hazards that will impact the Desert Hot Springs planning area. Critical parameters include whether foundations and/or structures straddle the fault, distance between the fault and various portions in the City, the maximum credible earthquake each fault is capable of generating, the intensity of ground shaking expressed as a fraction of the acceleration of gravity (g), and the Modified Mercalli (MM) seismic intensity values that have been calculated for the City. In general, peak ground accelerations and seismic intensity values decrease with increasing distance from the causative fault. However, local site conditions, such as the top of ridges, may amplify the seismic waves generated by an earthquake, resulting in higher accelerations than those discussed below.

With the significant risk of the community being exposed to extreme seismic forces, an effective seismic hazard reduction program, should include the identification and mapping of geologic and seismic hazards, the enforcement of building and fire codes, and the expedient retrofitting and rehabilitation of weak structures. Programs should also be developed to help City residents to provide for themselves and their families in the aftermath of an earthquake.

### **San Andreas Fault Zone**

The San Andreas Fault Zone is the principal boundary between the Pacific and North American plates and locally has been divided into several segments. The San Bernardino Mountains segment is a structurally complex zone northwest of the City and is

accommodated by several subparallel fault strands, the most important of these being the Coachella Valley Segment (Mission Creek), San Geronio and Banning Faults. It is suggested that fault ruptures along the San Geronio branch can cause simultaneous rupture along the Banning Fault. Movement along this segment is estimated at approximately  $24 \pm 5$  mm/yr., with an average earthquake recurrence interval of 146 years. More recently, since the year 1192 there have been six ruptures on this segment averaging once every 106 years. The most recent surface-rupturing earthquake on this segment is thought to have occurred in 1812, 183 years ago. It is estimated that this segment has a 28 percent probability of rupturing in the time period between 1994 and 2024.

### **The Coachella Valley Segment (Mission Creek Fault)**

The southernmost portion of the San Andreas Fault Zone capable of impacting the City is the Coachella Valley segment (Mission Creek Fault), which bisects the eastern and most heavily populated portion of the City. This fault is currently considered the main trace of the San Andreas Fault in the Coachella Valley. No earthquakes have been recorded on this segment in historic times, and on-going analysis suggests that the last surface rupture on this segment occurred around 1680 A.D. Studies at Indio indicate that prior to 1680, earthquakes on this fault occurred on an average interval of 220 years. There is evidence of simultaneous rupture along the San Bernardino and Coachella segments around 1680 and 1450. The Coachella segment has experienced creep (slow slippage) at the rate of about 4 mm/yr. but has a long-term slip rate of about  $25 \pm 5$  mm/yr. This segment is estimated to have a 22 percent probability of rupturing in the period between 1994 and 2024. A Magnitude 8.0 earthquake on this segment is estimated to be capable of generating peak ground accelerations of between 0.5 and 0.75g in Desert Hot Springs.

### **Banning Fault**

The Banning Fault is considered the southernmost strand of the San Andreas Fault Zone, and consists of three segments with activity appearing to have shifted eastward over time. This fault is believed to be the source of the 1986 North Palm Springs earthquake of magnitude 5.9, which caused secondary ground



fractures and landslides and had its epicenter in the western Planning Area. A Magnitude 7.5 earthquake on the Banning Fault is currently (1977) considered capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations of up to 0.9g in the City. Even higher accelerations can be expected on ridgelines and immediately adjacent to the fault in the southern portion of the City SOI.

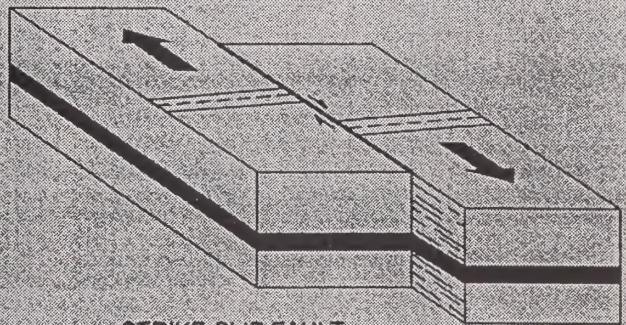
### Blind Canyon Fault

The Blind Canyon Fault was mapped as a generally north-trending fault extending north through Blind Canyon and into the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The fault also extends south across the Cornerstone property (Section 29) and trends southeast from the intersection of Miracle Hill Road and Pierson Boulevard.

This fault may connect further south with the Mission Creek Fault. Whether the Blind Canyon Fault is active has not been conclusively established, however evidence supports considering this fault potentially active and the fault may also move in sympathy with movement on the San Andreas Fault. It is recommended that development proposed along this fault be required to conduct fault hazard studies to locate the fault and to determine appropriate geotechnical mitigations

The movement along a **strike-slip fault** is approximately parallel to the strike of the fault, meaning the rocks move past each other horizontally.

The San Andreas is a strike-slip fault that has displaced rocks hundreds of miles. As a result of horizontal movement along the fault, rocks of vastly different age and composition have been placed side by side. The San Andreas fault is a fault zone rather than a single fault, and movement may occur along any of the many fault surfaces in the zone. The surface effects of the San Andreas fault zone can be observed for over 600 miles (1,000 km).



STRIKE-SLIP FAULT

### Pinto Mountain - Morongo Fault

The Pinto Mountain-Morongo Fault is one of several east-west-trending, high-angle strike-slip faults with left-lateral movement, which means it is similar to and may be directly associated with the San Andreas Fault Zone. Traceable for 47 miles from its linkage with the main trace of the San Andreas, the fault extends eastward beyond Twentynine Palms near and along the base of the Sawtooth Mountains, which are evidence of the uplift component in this fault's movement. This fault is active and has recently experienced sympathetic movement and ground ruptures associated with the 1992 Landers earthquake (magnitude 7.6). The Pinto Mountain-Morongo Fault is considered capable of generating a maximum credible earthquake of 7.3 to 7.4. Such an event would generate peak horizontal ground acceleration of up to 0.6g in the northern reaches of the City Planning Area.

### Secondary Active Fault Zones

In addition to the major active fault branches associated with the San Andreas Fault Zone, there are numerous other active faults in the region that have the potential of impacting the City as a result of a major seismic event along these faults. Each of these secondary faults/zones are briefly discussed below.

### Blue Cut Fault

The Blue Cut Fault is a east-west trending fault located along the north flank of the Eagle Mountains, near the southeast corner of the Mojave Desert. This fault appears to be accommodating some of the north-south compression that results from the "big bend" in the San Andreas Fault north of Los Angeles. It is considered one of the major active surface faults in Southern California but with very long recurrence intervals. An earthquake along this

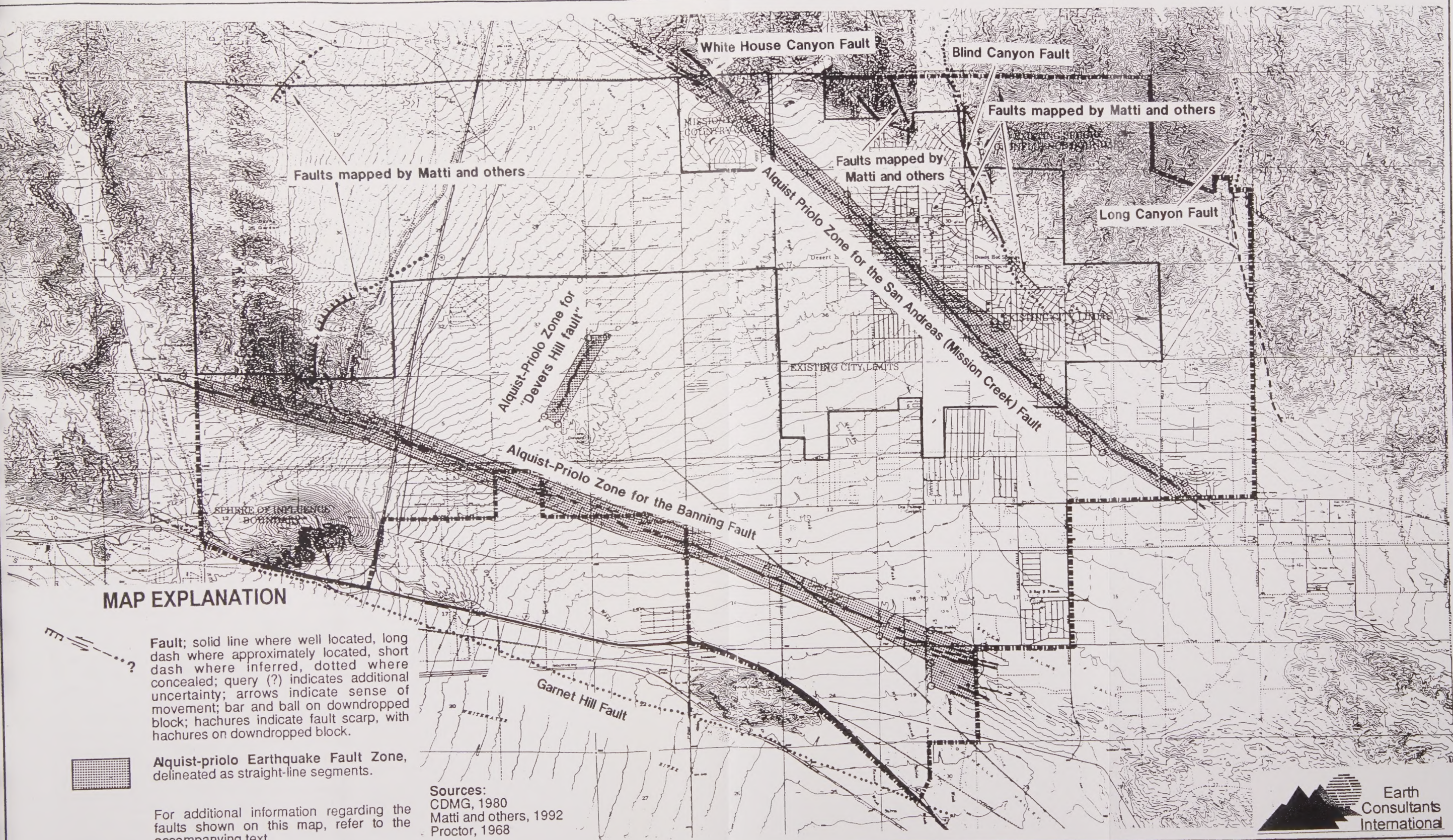


fault is estimated to be capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations of between 0.1 and 0.3g in the City.

### **Johnson Valley Fault**

The Johnson Valley Fault, one of several northwest-trending faults in the Mojave Desert not far north of Desert Hot Springs, which collectively appear to be accommodating between 9% and 23% of the motion between the North American Plate and the Pacific Plate. These faults are referred to as the Eastern California or Mojave Shear Zone. The June, 1992 Magnitude 7.6 Landers Earthquake occurred on the Johnson Valley Fault and was strongly felt in the Desert Hot Springs area. Trenching indicates that this fault had last ruptured about 9,000 years ago. An earthquake of Magnitude 7.5 on this or nearby faults is estimated to be capable of generating peak horizontal ground accelerations of about 0.2 to 0.3g in Desert Hot Springs.





**TERRA NOVA**

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# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS GENERAL PLAN**

|                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City Limits: —————                                                             |
| Sphere of Influence: ■■■■■■                                                    |
| Date: 2/18/97                                                                  |
| Base Map: Desert Hot Springs,<br>and Seven Palms Valley<br>USGS 7.5' Quad Maps |

## **Faults in the Desert Hot Springs General Plan Area**

Exhibit  
 V-1







## **San Jacinto Fault Zone**

The San Jacinto Fault Zone consists of a series of closely spaced faults that form the western margin of the San Jacinto Mountains. The fault zone extends from its junction with the San Andreas Fault in San Bernardino and runs southeasterly to Brawley and on to the US/Mexico border as the Imperial Fault. This active fault zone has generated at least ten moderate (Magnitude 6-7) earthquakes in the last 100 years. Two segments of this fault located closest to the City have a high (37 to 43 percent) probability of rupturing in the period from 1994 to 2024. A maximum credible earthquake of Magnitude 7.0 on any of the three closest segments of this fault is estimated to generate peak horizontal accelerations in the area of about 0.06 to 0.16g.

## **Other Seismically Induced Geologic Hazards**

While direct effects such as ground rupture and ground acceleration are typically associated with earthquakes, there are other seismically induced hazards that can injure people and damage structures. These hazards include liquefaction, dynamic settlement, ground fracturing or fissuring, lateral spreads, slumps, landslides, and earth or rock falls. Each of these is briefly discussed below.

### **Liquefaction**

When loose, unconsolidated, saturated, sandy soils are subjected to ground vibrations during a seismic event they may liquefy; this phenomenon is called liquefaction. This occurs in areas where the ground water table is within 50 feet of the ground surface and that are subject to Modified Mercalli Intensity values of VII or greater. Significant ground shaking can suddenly increase water pressure in the pores between soil particles and cause soils to lose cohesion and to "liquefy". Effects include a loss of bearing strength, ground oscillations, lateral spread and slumping. This hazard is considered low in the Desert Hot Springs area, principally because of the approximate depth of 150 to 200 feet to ground water. The exception includes lands located immediately adjacent to and on the north side of the Banning and Coachella Valley (Mission Creek) Faults, which dike ground water and allow it to rise within 50 feet of the surface.

## **Seismically Induced Settlement**

Under some circumstances, strong ground shaking can cause densification or compaction of soils resulting in local or regional settlement of the ground surface. This can result in local differential settlement and damage to foundations and structures, as well as damage to water and sewer lines. This potential is affected by the intensity and duration of ground shaking and the relative density of the subsurface soils. Windblown sands and other recently deposited sediments are typically loose and, therefore, potentially subject to seismically induced settlement. In the Planning Area, wind and especially stream-deposited sediment are the predominant soil types (see Exhibit V-2: Seismically Induced Rock Falls and Land Slide Susceptibility Map), and development in these locations should include site-specific subsurface geotechnical investigations that address this potential seismic hazard. Proper excavation, compaction and foundation design can accommodate some of the seismic settlement potential.

## **Seismically Induced Slope Instability**

Seismically induced landslides and rock falls can be expected to occur on both the northern and western portions of the General Plan study area. It is estimated that ground acceleration of at least 0.10g in steep terrain is necessary to induce earthquake-related rock falls. With several faults capable of generating peak ground accelerations over 0.10g in the study area, there is a high potential for seismically-induced rock falls and landslides to occur in Desert Hot Springs and its Sphere-of-Influence. The 1986 Banning Fault earthquake induced numerous landslides on the sides of steep-walled canyons, while debris slides and rockfalls occurred in fractured basement rocks of the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains. Fractures and landslides are likely to occur on elevated mountainous terrain in these two ranges, especially where the bedrock is intensely fractured or jointed. Sections of Interstate-10, Highway 62 and Palm Drive could be blocked by fallen rock debris or from landslides immediately following an earthquake, which would hinder rescue and evacuation operations. Rock falls could also impact developments adjacent to mountain slopes, especially those along the toe of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Throughout



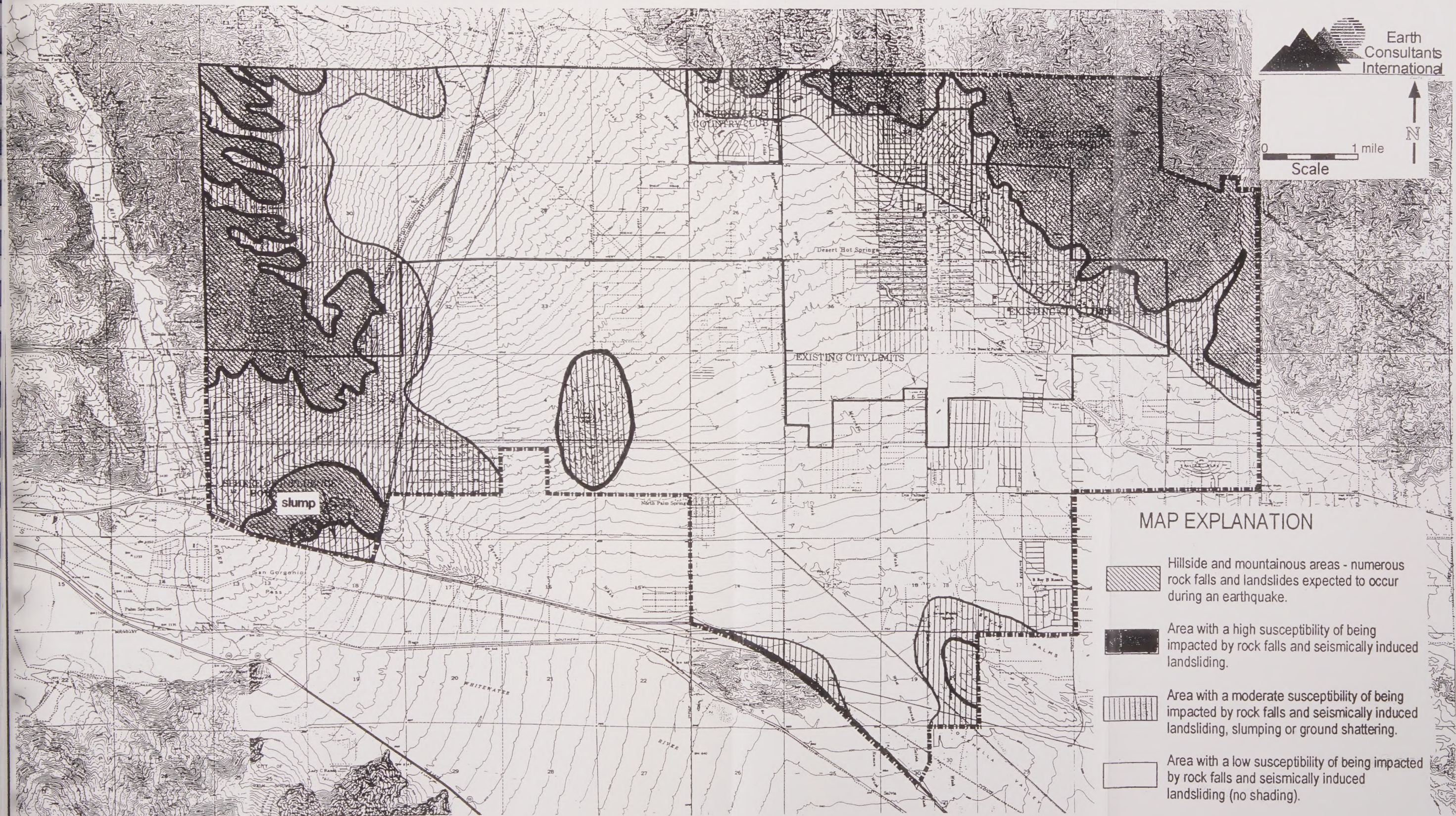
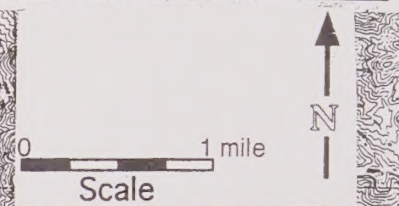
the City, manufactured slopes of significant height will also be susceptible to failure and should be engineered to resist seismically induced failure.

### **Seismically Induced Inundation**

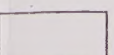
Failure of water tanks, reservoirs, retention basins, recharge basins and other water storage structures can be caused by seismic events, especially in areas susceptible to ground failure. There are several above ground water storage tanks in the City that could be subject to damage in an earthquake. Damage to these tanks could significantly hinder efforts to suppress fires and could greatly limit supply and availability of potable water after a major earthquake.

With regard to stormwater retention basins, there are currently no meaningful opportunities for seismically induced inundation down grade. Future private and public facilities may include stormwater detention and groundwater recharge basins. Groundwater recharge basins should be designed and engineered to address this seismic potential. However, the infrequency of stormwater retention, the limited likelihood of stormwater storage, and the occurrence of a major earthquake substantially reduces, but does not eliminate, this potential hazard. Design engineering of future major detention/retention facilities will need to focus on the seismic hazards of the area when planning for and constructing these facilities.





### MAP EXPLANATION

-  Hillside and mountainous areas - numerous rock falls and landslides expected to occur during an earthquake.
-  Area with a high susceptibility of being impacted by rock falls and seismically induced landsliding.
-  Area with a moderate susceptibility of being impacted by rock falls and seismically induced landsliding, slumping or ground shattering.
-  Area with a low susceptibility of being impacted by rock falls and seismically induced landsliding (no shading).



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## CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS GENERAL PLAN

City Limits: ———  
Sphere of Influence: ■■■■■  
Date: 2/18/97  
Base Map: Desert Hot Springs,  
and Seven Palms Valley  
USGS 7.5' Quad Maps

## Seismically Induced Rock Falls and Landslide Susceptibility Map

Exhibit  
V-2







### **Colorado River Aqueduct**

The Colorado River Aqueduct skirts the Planning Area to the north and crosses through the western portion of the City. The aqueduct crosses the Coachella Valley (Mission Creek) Fault about one mile north of the city limits, within the flood plain of the Big Morongo Wash. A surface-rupturing earthquake on either the Coachella Valley or San Bernardino Mountains segments of the San Andreas could damage the aqueduct and release large volumes of water. Repairs to the aqueduct could take up to two weeks.

### **Collapsible and Expansive Soils**

Soils are an important component of the geotechnical conditions in the General Plan study area. Two considerations are the potential of soils to collapse or to expand and to cause damage to structures in either instance. Soil collapse typically occurs in recently (Holocene) deposited sediments laid down by wind or water, which typically contain minute pores and voids. When saturated, collapsible soils undergo a rearrangement of their grains and a loss of cohesion or cementation, resulting in a substantial and rapid settlement even under relatively low loads. The alluvial and aeolian sediments in the planning area are prone to collapse, and this potential should be evaluated on a site-specific basis as part of soils and other geotechnical studies for development. Mitigation can be accomplished through a variety of design and construction methods. Post-construction management of drainage, irrigation and other water sources should be designed to prevent saturation of foundation soils.

Expansive soils are those which include a significant amount of clay and are subject to swelling. Expansive soils can change in volume and can exert significant pressure on loads (such as buildings) that are placed on them. In the General Plan study area, expansive soils are not generally considered a hazard because of the relatively minor amount of clay present in the soils. Where expansive soils may occur is in the Qf3 and Qf4 soils, which generally occur north of the Mission Creek Fault and in the vicinity of Whitewater Hill (see the Program EIR).

### **Wind Erosion and Blowsand**

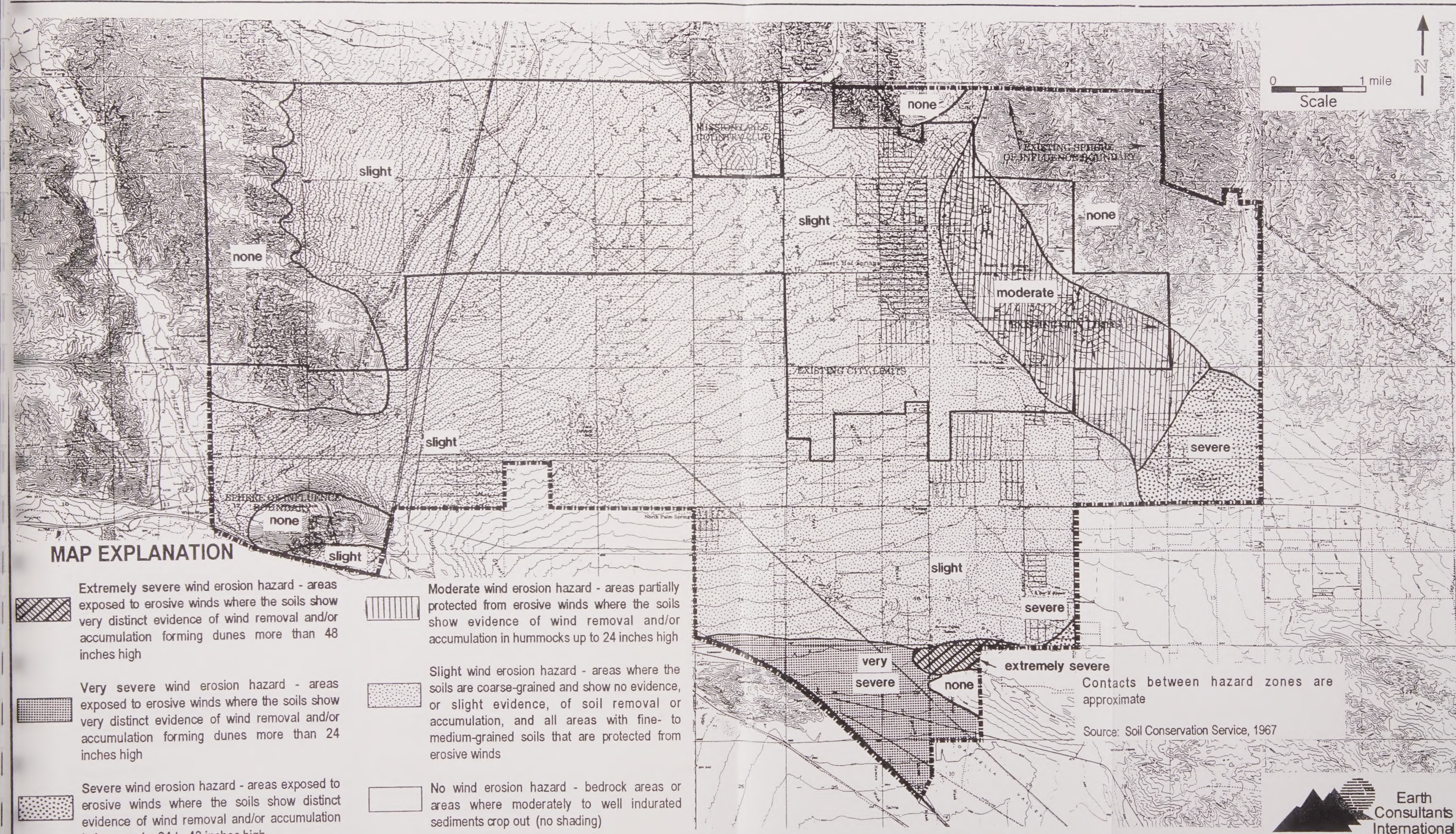
The City and its Sphere-of-Influence are located in an area with a susceptibility to wind erosion ranging from "Extremely Severe" to "None". The most severe conditions occur in the southern SOI at 20th Avenue primarily east of Palm Drive and to the immediate west. The geomorphology of the Coachella Valley, its extreme aridity and the funnelled marine air masses to the west through the San Gorgonio Pass conspire to create strong and persistent winds in the valley. These strong winds have been blowing and redistributing sand deposits in the area for thousands of years. Lands disturbed by flooding, grading or agricultural activities are, therefore, subject to significant erosive forces that suspend fine dust and transport sand over great distances.

In addition to damage to vehicles, structures and other improvements, blowing sand collects on streets, driveways and in other areas where it must be removed at considerable expense. Exhibit V-3 shows the wind erosion hazard areas occurring within the General Plan study area. Wind erosion and blowing sand also contribute to a significant health threat associated with the suspension of fine particulate matter of ten microns and smaller (PM10). These conditions have required the development and implementation of a multifaceted mitigation plan to help protect human health (also see Air Quality Element).









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# CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS GENERAL PLAN

|                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City Limits:                                                                |
| Sphere of Influence:                                                        |
| Date: 2/18/97                                                               |
| Base Map: Desert Hot Springs, and Seven Palms Valley<br>USGS 7.5' Quad Maps |

## Wind Hazard Zones in the Desert Hot Springs Area



Exhibit  
V-3







## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

With substantially challenges posed by local seismic and geotechnical conditions, the City will need to rely on several mechanisms to address hazards identified in this Element. These include the regulations and guidelines set forth in the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, the State CEQA Statutes and Guidelines, PM10 Implementation Plan, Zoning Ordinance, the Uniform Building Code, and the Subdivision Ordinance. The development review process of the City Community Development Department must assure that development proposals are thoroughly evaluated with regard to geotechnical and seismic safety, that all necessary special studies are conducted and reviewed, and that comprehensive mitigation measures are developed and implemented.

The City should also work with State, Regional, and County agencies to establish and maintain an up- to- date information database on geotechnical and seismic conditions in the region, legislation affecting the City's regulatory responsibilities, and changing technical assessments that refine or recharacterize the geotechnical hazards affecting the region.

## **GEOTECHNICAL ELEMENT GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Maximized protection from and minimize vulnerability to the general health safety and welfare of the community from the effects of geotechnical hazards that may impact lives, property and economic well-being of the community.

#### **Policy 1**

The City shall establish and maintain maps illustrating the location of seismic and other geotechnical hazard zones occurring within the City boundaries and Sphere-of-Influence.

#### **Program 1 A**

The City shall periodically confer with the California Division of Mines and Geology to develop and maintain updated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning maps and other information on seismic and other geotechnical hazards affecting the community.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; State Division of Mines and Geology

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 1 B**

The City shall consult and cooperate with surrounding communities and applicable state and federal agencies, in an on-going program to improve and update the database and other information on regional geologic/seismic conditions.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Applicable state and federal agencies

**Schedule:** 2001-02, Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

In accordance with State law, development proposals within designated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones and along the Blind Canyon Fault shall be accompanied by appropriate geotechnical analysis.

#### **Program 2 A**

The City shall prepare an informational handout, which specifies the format and contents of geotechnical and fault investigations which must be carried out within Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, City Engineer; County Geologist

**Schedule:** Immediately.

#### **Program 2 B**

The City shall establish a cooperative arrangement with the County Geologist, the State Geologist, or a contract geological engineer to review and determine the adequacy of geotechnical and fault hazard studies prepared within the City.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, City Engineer; County Geologist

**Schedule:** Immediately.

#### **Policy 3**

The Blind Canyon Fault shall be considered equivalent to and shall be regulated as a Fault Hazard Management Zone.



### **Program 3 A**

The City shall establish criteria for and shall require the preparation of fault hazard analyses across the Blind Canyon Fault and shall restrict development in a manner consistent with the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and the General Plan Geotechnical Report.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, City Engineer; County Geologist  
**Schedule:** Immediately

### **Policy 4**

The City shall identify and initiate a program to encourage the rehabilitation of unreinforced masonry buildings and other major structures, which pose a threat or hazard, due to inadequate seismic design, engineering or construction.

### **Program 4 A**

The City shall identify inadequately designed/constructed structures and prepare and/or distribute handouts and provide information on possible sources of funding to facilitate the rehabilitation of unreinforced masonry buildings and other major structures which are inadequately constructed to withstand major seismic impacts.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, City Engineer  
**Schedule:** 2001-02.

### **Policy 5**

The City shall cooperate and coordinate with public and quasi-public agencies to assure the continued functionality of major utility services in the event of a major earthquake.

### **Program 5 A**

City staff shall contact and establish working relationships and strategies with the Public Utilities Commission, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas, Mission Springs and Coachella Valley Water Districts and other appropriate agencies to strengthen or relocate facilities, and take other appropriate measures to safeguard water, electricity, natural gas and other transmission and distribution systems.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Public Utilities  
**Schedule:** 2001-Continuous

### **Program 5 B**

The City shall take a pro-active position to encourage and cooperate with CalTrans to promote the expeditious stabilizing of susceptible slopes and strengthening of bridges, elevated roadways and other structures along state highways, which may be subject to failure during major seismic events, thereby isolating portions of the community from emergency aid and assistance.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

### **Program 5 C**

The City shall coordinate with the Desert Hospital and other local emergency preparedness agencies to enhance the survivability of and access to these essential facilities in the event of a major earthquake.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; Desert Hospital

**Schedule:** 2001; Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

The City shall play an active role in the development and/or distribution of earthquake preparedness information and materials to City residents and local businesses.

### **Program 6 A**

Information shall be collected from a wide variety of sources, including public agencies and utility companies, providing instruction on earthquake preparedness. Said materials shall be made available to residents and businesses throughout the City.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; State, County and City Offices of Emergency Preparedness; Public Utilities

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.



### **Program 6 B**

The City shall confer and cooperate with local utility companies, Mission Springs and Coachella Valley Water Districts, Palm Springs Unified School District, police and fire departments, and others to coordinate education of the general public regarding appropriate action before, during and after earthquakes and other disasters.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Engineer; City Emergency Preparedness Coordinator; PSUSD; MSWD & CVWD; Public Utilities

**Schedule:** 2001-02, Continuous.

### **Policy 7**

In areas of high seismicity, the City shall encourage the location of septic tank leach fields, seepage pits, drainage facilities and heavily irrigated areas away from foundations and other structural supports to minimize the creation of a localized collapse of soils and associated hazards.

### **Program 7 A**

Where soil conditions warrant, development applications shall include plans indicating the location of leach fields, seepage pits, drainage facilities and water-dependent landscaping to be reviewed by City staff to identify potential for ground saturation; City may require their location away from foundation and other structural supports.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, City Engineer

**Schedule:** Immediate; On application basis.

### **Policy 8**

Development in areas identified as being subject to a rockfall or landslide hazard shall be avoided.

### **Program 8 A**

The City shall make available copies of the General Plan Rockfall/Landslide Susceptibility map and discourage development within areas so designated, or require detailed geotechnical analysis and require mitigation measures that reduce associated hazards to insignificant levels.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Engineer/Consulting Geologist

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.



# FLOODING & HYDROLOGY ELEMENT

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Flooding and Hydrology Element is to set forth the goals, policies and programs that are intended to address potential drainage and flooding hazards occurring within the community. The primary intent of this element is to protect the general health, safety and welfare of the community from potential flood and associated hazards. It references and coordinates with other elements of the General Plan which also address threats to the lives and property of the community's residents. The potential for and extent of major future flooding is also assessed. It is the intention of the community to facilitate, plan and implement the phased development of flood control facilities, both project-specific and City-wide. Provisions for open space and multiple uses, wildlife, and pedestrian and equestrian corridors within major drainages are also planned.

## BACKGROUND

Desert Hot Springs is profoundly affected by occasionally severe flooding, which has isolated and cut off much of the City from surrounding communities. In this context, the Flooding & Hydrology has a direct relationship to the Emergency Preparedness Element, which addresses the City's most significant environmental threats. Also related, though to a lesser extent, is the Geotechnical Element, which addresses associated liquefaction, erosion threats and water storage facilities. The Hazardous and Toxic Wastes Element is also related by the potential of stormwater runoff to transport hazardous and toxic materials stored on the surface and underground. Other related elements include the Land Use Element which affects essential relationships of use to location-specific threats, and the Circulation Element which defines the availability of and need for secure access and evacuation routes in the event of a major flooding.

State statutes, policies and regulations require that the General Plan of counties and cities identify and offer mitigation measures for existing and potential flooding hazards in the

area. Specifically, Chapter 73 of the Statutes of California, 1939 mandates the joint planning of area-wide drainage plans affecting local jurisdictions. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 8589.5 and 65302(g), the jurisdiction is required to provide mapping of areas subject to inundation in the event of dam failures. Government Code Section 8401(c) requires that local governments plan, adopt, and enforce land use regulations for flood plain management. Known as the Cobey-Alquist Flood Plain Management Act, this legislation also sets forth requirements for receiving state financial assistance for flood control.

## Desert Conditions and Flood Hazards

The City of Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley enjoy a subtropical desert climate. Mean annual rainfall is very low from the desert floor into the foothills, ranging from 4 to 6 inches per year and averaging about 5 to 6 inches along the Little San Bernardino foothills. In some years no measurable rainfall has been reported within the planning area. Summer daytime temperatures can occasionally exceed 125°F and winter temperatures seldom fall below freezing. The surrounding mountain slopes generally receive rainfall that increases with elevation. The mountains and upper elevations of the planning area are also generally cooler, with an approximate 5°F drop with every 1,000 foot increase in elevation.

The major drainages of Mission Creek, Big and Little Morongo Creeks, Blind Creek, Long Creek and its tributaries, other mountain canyons and their alluvial fans, and runoff associated with the foothills of the San Bernardino and Little San Bernardino Mountains comprise areas of potential flooding in the planning area. Most of the rainfall occurs during the cooler months of November through March, but occasional high-intensity thunderstorms and tropical storms occur in late summer and early fall. Although the ground may be generally dry at the beginning of a storm, sufficient amounts and intensities of rainfall can saturate the surface, substantially reducing percolation and increasing runoff.



Development also increases runoff by creating large areas of impervious surfaces. Increased runoff upstream can be a significant contributor to downstream damage.

Major historic storm events are used to gauge the potential for future flooding. Benchmark storms used by the Army Corps of Engineers to calculate the most intense credible storm include the storm of September 24, 1939. Centered over Indio and consisting of a thunderstorm preceding a major storm off the west coast of Mexico, this intense storm generated 6.45 inches of rain in a period of 6 hours. As further example of the storm runoff potential in the area, the tropical storm Kathleen of September 9-11, 1976 generated very heavy general rainfall over a three county area, with Desert Hot Springs receiving three inches. The surrounding hills and mountains received as much as 14 inches, with rainfalls generally increasing with elevation.

### **Local and Regional Flood Control**

The generation and management of stormwater runoff is typically divided into two separate categories, local and regional drainage, which are ultimately interrelated. Local drainage is either defined by the limited size of the drainage area or to the generation of runoff in association with urban development. Regional drainage consists of large-scale runoff and facilities capturing and conveying runoff from over a larger geographic area. Regional drainage ultimately picks up and conveys local drainage through the careful integration of these two systems.

### **Regional Flood Control and the Riverside County Flood Control District**

The Riverside County Flood Control District is responsible for the management of regional drainage within and in the vicinity of Desert Hot Springs, including rivers, major streams and their tributaries, and areas of significant sheet flooding. The District is empowered with broad management functions, including flood control planning and construction of drainage improvements for regional flood control facilities, as well as watershed and watercourse protection related to those facilities. To carry out its mandate, the District (Riverside County)

also has powers of taxation, bonded indebtedness, land and water rights acquisition, and cooperative partnerships with local, state and federal agencies. The Riverside County Board of Supervisors acts as the official decision-making body of the District.

### **Local Drainage Management**

The County has the primary responsibility, in close cooperation and coordination with the City, for managing regional drainage in and around the community, and has also played a key role in the management of local drainage. The still current 1982 Master Drainage Plan for the City of Desert Hot Springs was prepared by the Riverside County Flood Control District. While costs originally assigned to these facilities are outdated, the design volumes in cubic feet per second and the recommended types of facilities remain valid.

The effectiveness with which the City and District manage drainage issues will have a direct effect on the scale, complexity and cost of future flood control facilities. The cost-effectiveness of prevention and on-site management should be actively integrated into community land use planning and regulation, recognizing significant physical and financial constraints in many areas of City.

The preservation of lands constrained by topography or drainage, including steep slopes, areas rich in vegetation and cover, and alluvial plains and drainage channels greatly reduces runoff and preserves the capacity of downstream facilities. The planned integration of on-site stormwater detention facilities, where possible and appropriate, also significantly reduces the needed size of downstream facilities, while frequently creating opportunities for enhanced open space and/or recreation areas.

### **FEMA and the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps**

Many of the areas of the United States subject to flooding from 100-year storms have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The resulting documents are the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which serve as the basis for determining the need for and availability of federal flood insurance. Exhibit V-4 is a



compilation of the data presented in three corresponding FIRM Community Panels (maps). The FEMA maps for the City of Desert Hot Springs planning area designate lands within the 100-year flood plain (Zone A). These areas include washes, channels and areas subject to sheet flow flooding.

Flooding and inundation is also expected and is designated by FEMA in the Sphere area immediately north of Interstate-10, with varying depths and velocities ranging from three feet deep and flows of up to eight feet per second. There are also extensive areas designated Zone X on the FEMA maps, these being areas located between the 100 and the 500-year flood or areas subject to 100-year flooding but at depths less than one foot. These occur with most of the urban core of the community and outside the major drainages (Please see Exhibit V-4). Each of the applicable flood zones are briefly described below.

- A** Areas of 100-year flood; base flood elevations have not been determined.
- AO:** Special Flood Hazard Areas inundated by types of 100-year shallow flooding where depths are between 1.0 and 3.0 feet; depths are shown, or areas of 100-year alluvial fan flooding, depths and velocities shown, but no flood hazard factors are determined.
- X:** Areas between limits of the 100 year flood and 500 year flood; or certain areas subject to 100 year flooding with average depths less than one (1) foot or where the contributing drainage area is less than one square mile; or areas protected by levees from the 100-year flood.

- C:** Areas lying outside the boundaries of the 100-year and 500-year flood plains and generally considered safe from flooding.

### **Major and Minor Flood Control Facilities**

Capital projects such as dikes, levees, channels, and debris and detention/retention basins have been constructed to manage project-specific, community and regional drainage systems in the community. Designing, financing and constructing these facilities are significant challenges and important opportunities. Methods of flood control and their costs are weighed against the economic impacts likely to result from major flooding. In some areas, flood control improvements are frequently necessitated by development itself, which creates its own runoff management problems.

The Mission Creek, Big and Little Morongo Creeks, Blind Creek, and Long Creek are the main drainages in the City planning area. These drainages are substantial in area and are discharged onto relatively steep alluvial fans and generate high velocities. These flows in major storms of several thousand cubic feet of water per second have tremendous force and scouring potential. Substantial improvements, including concrete channel armoring, diversion dikes and levees, and bridges, requires prioritizing these improvements for long-term construction.



**Table V-1:  
Major and Minor Drainages  
Desert Hot Springs Planning Area**

| <b>Creek/Channel</b>           | <b>Construction Status</b> | <b>Cost (Mil<sup>1</sup>)</b> | <b>Funding</b>                               |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Mission Creek                  | Partial                    | Unknown                       | FEMA <sup>2</sup> /District/ADP <sup>3</sup> |
| Big/Little Morongo Creeks      | None                       | \$ 9.0+                       | FEMA/District/ADP                            |
| Blind Creek (8th Street)       | Partial                    | \$ 2.16                       | FEMA/District/City                           |
| Long Creek                     | None                       | Unknown                       | FEMA/District/ADP                            |
| Foxdale Drain (Line B)         | None                       | \$ 4.7                        | District/City/Development                    |
| Line A (Two Bunch Palms Drain) | Partial                    | \$ 4.8                        | District/City/Development                    |
| Line C                         | None                       | \$ 1.5                        | District/City/Development                    |
| Line D                         | None                       | \$ 0.64                       | District/City/Development                    |
| Desert Hot Springs Drain       | Partial                    | Unknown                       | District/City/Development                    |

Source: Master Drainage Plan for the Desert Hot Springs Area. Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. February, 1982 and District Chief Engineer David Zappe, March, 1997.

1 All cost estimates, excepting Morongo Washes, are in 1982 dollars.

2 Federal Emergency Management Agency funds availability depends on funding policies.

3 Area Drainage Plan: benefit area development fee.

## **Regional Drainages And Facilities**

### **Mission Creek Drainage**

The Mission Creek Wash and partially constructed channel drains 36 square miles of the San Bernardino Mountains and has the potential to generate major storm flows within the planning area. Braided drainage is predominant for about two miles east of Highway 62, where flows are consolidated and somewhat controlled by an earthen channel at approximately Mission Lake Boulevard (extended). The potential for these flows to break out of established channels and to focus unpredictably on the wide alluvial fan has driven FEMA to designate a large 100-year flood plain in association with the Mission Creek drainage.

### **Big and Little Morongo Drainages**

The Big and Little Morongo Creeks drain the western portions of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The mouth of Big Morongo Creek is located one mile east of Highway 62, and flows in braided streams and sheetflows across and down the alluvial fan. The creek twice crosses Indian Avenue and clips the southwest corner of Mission Lakes Country Club. Big

Morongo has its confluence with Little Morongo Creek one-half mile south of Mission Lakes Boulevard and just west of Little Morongo Road.

The mouth of Little Morongo Creek is located two miles east of Big Morongo, with two smaller and intervening drainages. Little Morongo Creek discharges are confined by a concrete-lined channel located immediately north of Little Morongo Road (extended), which discharges these flows into channelized fairways of Mission Lakes Country Club. Little Morongo flows cross Mission Lakes Boulevard and continue south to join Big Morongo Creek. These combined flows have a projected 100-year peak volume of more than 17,000 cfs. As with Mission Creek, the largely unconfined nature of the flows from Big and Little Morongo Creeks has been the basis for FEMA to designate a large 100-year flood plain in association with these drainages.

The District, in close cooperation with the City and project developers, has designed facilities to control and convey storm flows from Big and Little Morongo Creeks. Currently (2000), the District is refining its plans with FEMA, who



must accept the method and design of flood control before lands can be removed from the current flood plain designations. An Area Drainage Plan has already been drafted, which will provide a mechanism for the District to recoup some of the costs (approximately \$ 9 million in 1997) of these facilities.

#### **Blind Creek/8th Street Levee**

The Blind Creek Channel and 8th Street levee are part of a system which conveys Blind Creek and local drainage southwest to join the combined Morongo Creek Channel just north of Pierson Boulevard. These facilities are partially improved and include the earthen levee, down-stream protection from which is partially recognized on FEMA flood maps. In addition to the main channel, these facilities will also include five feeder lines draining developed areas in the northern-most portion of the City.

#### **Local Drainages and Facilities**

Local drainages can pose a significant flood hazard to existing and future development in the City. To address these threats from local drainages, in 1982 the Riverside County Flood Control District prepared a master drainage plan for the urban core of the City. These facilities were broken down into 30 separate cost components, which totaled \$ 15,230,000 in 1982. The major components of the local drainage plan are listed in the above table. The District's Chief Engineer has indicated that projected volumes and needed facilities set forth in the 1982 plan are still valid.

#### **Line A/Two Bunch Palms Drain**

Line A is planned for construction in or adjacent to the Two Bunch Palms Trail right-of-way. The Master Drainage Plan references the reader to the District for more information on channel design. Two major feeder lines and associated collectors are planned to capture drainage as far north as Third Street. Line A is then planned as an open channel approximately 1,600 feet east of Palm Drive from which point it proceeds southeast to the natural drainage course of the Desert Hot Springs Creek. The Line A/Two Bunch Channel improvements are extensive and make the project the most expensive component of the local drainage plan.

#### **Line B/Foxdale Drain**

This drainage system is planned to primarily drain lands east of Foxdale, with portions extending to Mountain View Road. That portion of the drainage area has also been addressed in the Cornerstone Specific Plan, which is designed to provide debris basins and other improvements which may reduce the cost of the downstream facilities. This system could also be one of the most costly to construct to address local drainage.

#### **Land Use Planning as a Flood Control Strategy**

Thoughtful and appropriate land use planning and development is one of the most effective and direct methods of controlling flooding and limiting threats to lives and property. Consistent with other primary goals of the community, land use planning can call for the preservation of natural vegetation in the foothills and mountains, which function as natural water sheds for local drainage and ground water recharge, and can affect the volume of stormwater and debris that reach downstream facilities.

The exposure of people and improvements to storm hazards and damage can also be limited through careful land planning. Restrictions on the type and location of structures in the vicinity of major drainages within the community can greatly reduce potential losses. Within the limits of improved and unimproved 100-year floodplains, development should be severely limited and regulated. In some instances it will be appropriate to prohibit construction of structures for human habitation.

Within flood zones subject to sheet flooding, development approvals should be conditioned to assure protection of improvements from flood damage. Protection measures may include raising the finished floor level above the flood depth projected for the surrounding area and providing protection against scouring. Until such time as flood protection is provided, which removes areas from severe threats of flooding, development in these areas should be carefully regulated.



## **Flood Control and Wildlife Habitat and Recreation Enhancement**

The controlling of stormwater flows should also be viewed as an opportunity for multiple uses, including recreation and wildlife enhancement. Washes, detention basins and channels should be designed with this multi-use function in mind. In addition to the opportunity to integrate hiking and other trails into these facilities, these areas are commonly frequented by numerous birds and small and large mammals and can offer meaningful areas for passive enjoyment. They can be important as a source of forage and cover, and as relief from the more urban environments of the area, and offer opportunities for the continued integration of the natural desert habitat into the built environment.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The Flooding and Hydrology Element is implemented through the direct expression of policies and programs of the Element and through the implementation of other General Plan Elements, including the Water Resources, Open Space and Conservation, Land Use, and Biological Resources Elements. However, the principle and direct implementation of this element will be through the enforcement and implementation of the City Master Drainage Plan.

The Master Plan and its improvements help control and confine the area-wide drainage pattern to more discrete and focused routes where it can be better managed. It may also point to facilities that complement land use patterns, provide cost-effective flood control alternatives, and maximize opportunities for multiple uses, including enhanced groundwater recharge.

The Master Drainage Plans will also set critical parameters for future development along areas subject to area-wide flooding. The Element will also be implemented through the development guidelines and regulations of the Desert Hot Springs Zoning Ordinance, Grading Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance.















## **FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY GOALS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Comprehensive flood control system that assures the protection of lives, property and essential facilities within the community and assures all-weather access to regional roadways.

#### **Policy 1**

Assure that updated and effective Master Drainage Plans are implemented in a timely fashion for the near and long-term protection of the community and its residents.

#### **Program 1 A**

Continue to pro-actively participate with the Riverside County Flood Control District in the development and updating of Desert Hot Springs Master Drainage Plan, providing land use and other relevant data and information.

**Responsible Agencies:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; District

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

Provide for the implementation of drainage controls and improvements that enhance local conditions and are consistent with and complement the Master Drainage Plan.

#### **Program 2 A**

Local regulations and guidelines shall be established and/or updated to direct the management of runoff and provide for local drainage facilities that tie into and maximize the effective use of regional drainage facilities.

**Responsible Agencies:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department; District

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 2 B**

Adopt or update local drainage policies and development standards that reduce the rate of runoff from developed lands, consistent with capacities of public facilities and local and regional management plans, while providing opportunities for open space enhancement and multi-use.

**Responsible Agencies:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department; District

**Schedule:** Update every 5 years.

#### **Program 2 C**

Coordinate and cooperate with the Riverside County Flood Control District, FEMA and other potential management and funding sources to maximize the financial resources brought to bear on flood control project construction.

**Responsible Agencies:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; District; FEMA; Developers

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

City shall cooperate in securing FEMA map amendments recognizing the appropriate redesignation of the 100-year flood plains within the City boundaries and SOI.

#### **Program 3 A**

Working with the Riverside County Flood Control District, the City shall coordinate and cooperate in the filing of appropriate FEMA application materials to incrementally secure amendments to the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the City, consistent with existing and proposed improvements.

**Responsible Agencies:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; District; FEMA

**Schedule:** Continuous.



#### **Policy 4**

The mandates set forth in the Emergency Preparedness Element shall, to the extent applicable, be implemented through the Flooding and Hydrology Element and Master Drainage Plan.

#### **Program 4 A**

Confer and consult with the District, as well as CalTrans, to assure adequate all-weather crossings/facilities at appropriate locations along Palm Drive, Pierson Boulevard, Mission Lakes Boulevard, and especially those serving as emergency evacuation/access routes for the various neighborhoods of the planning area.

**Responsible Agencies:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; District; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

#### **Policy 5**

Major drainage facilities, including debris basins and flood control washes and channels, shall be designed to balance their enhancement as wildlife habitat and community open space amenities, consistent with the functional requirements of these facilities.

#### **Program 5 A**

Work closely with the District to assure that design opportunities for enhanced open space and recreation amenities, including habitat enhancement and hiking and equestrian trails, are fully explored and incorporated when designing and constructing channels, debris and detention basins, and other major drainage facilities, to the greatest extent practical.

**Responsible Agencies:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; District.

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

#### **Policy 6**

In addition to other methods, the City shall also establish as appropriate, Area Drainage Plans or Benefit Assessment Districts for purposes of funding needed drainage improvements benefiting defined tributary areas of the community.

#### **Policy 7**

All development proposed on lands of one (1) acre or larger shall be required to retain 100 percent of the 100-year storm runoff, that is generated by development, on-site.



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# NOISE ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The intent of the Noise Element is to help coordinate the community's various land uses with the existing and future noise environment, and to ensure that any negative effects of noise are minimized or avoided completely. As development continues, the City shall carefully review proposals to ensure that land uses incompatible with the noise environment are avoided. It is the intention of this element to identify current noise problems within the City and its Sphere-of-Influence and to determine future noise impacts resulting from continued growth. Through the implementation of the policies and programs of this element, any current and future adverse noise impacts can be greatly reduced or avoided entirely, and the general health, safety and welfare of the community can be protected from significant noise impacts.

## BACKGROUND

There is a direct relationship between the Noise Element and the Land Use and Circulation Elements. The location of sensitive land uses including housing, schools and medical facilities, are also affected by issues addressed in the Noise Element. The element also has a direct relationship to the Economic Development Element, with the City's peaceful and quiet atmosphere a major community asset. Low noise levels are a basic element of the residential and spa resort environment of the community. Generally, the City enjoys a quiet noise environment, with existing community noise being dominated by local traffic and commercial operations and heating/ventilation equipment. In general, however, the residential neighborhoods of the community are quiet, with average noise levels typical of quiet rural areas.

A wide range of issues are addressed in the Noise Element, including those set forth in subsection (f) of California Government Code Section 65302, which requires that the Noise Element identify and analyze noise problems in the community. The implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA),

Section 21083.1, mandates adherence to the State Guidelines and empowers communities to determine whether or not a proposed project may have a "significant effect on the environment". These significant impacts may range from excessive traffic noise in a residential neighborhood, to industrial manufacturing noise impacting a hospital or convalescent home.

A Model Community Noise Control Ordinance has been prepared by the California Department of Health Services, which was developed in accordance with Section 46062 of the Health and Safety Code to assist local agencies in the development of model ordinances to control and abate noise. State guidelines require that a community noise control ordinance be adopted, which sets forth control policies and programs that "minimize the exposure of community residents to excessive noise."

The potential psychological and physiological impacts of noise have been of concern for many years, and have increased significantly in recent years. Excessive noise levels are not only a potential annoyance but can constitute a significant health threat resulting in temporary or permanent hearing loss and mental distress. The noise environment can also have a profound influence on the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors.

## Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)

Noise is defined as unwanted or undesired sound. Airborne sound is the result of a very rapid change in air pressure from the surrounding "normal" atmospheric pressure. The combination of noise from all sources near and far is the Ambient Noise Level. For purposes of this discussion, the ambient noise level at a given location is termed "environmental noise".

Understanding environmental noise requires some familiarity with the physical description of noise. The important physical characteristics of sound include its frequency range,



intensity/loudness and temporal/time-varying aspect. The decibel (dB), A-weighted level (dBA), and Community Noise Equivalency Level (CNEL) are all units of measurement used to describe and numerically weight noise.

The unit of measurement describing the amplitude or strength of sound is the decibel. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is the weighted average of the intensity of a sound, with corrections for time of day, and averaged over 24 hours. The time of day corrections require the addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and the addition of 10 decibels to sound levels at night between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. These additions are made during these time periods because during the evening and night hours, with the decrease in overall amount and loudness of noise generated when compared to daytime hours, there is an increased sensitivity to sounds. For this reason sounds seem louder and are weighted accordingly. Essentially, during these evening and night hours the maximum tolerable noise levels should be 5 to 10 dBA lower and the CNEL number is weighted to assure this bias.

### **Ranges and Effects of Noise**

The most common sounds vary between 40 dB (very quiet) and 100 dB (very loud). Normal conversation at three feet is roughly 60 dB, while loud engine noises equate to 110 dB, which can cause serious discomfort. Due to the logarithmic nature of the sound measuring (decibel) scale, doubling the sound energy of a noise source only increases the decibel rating by 3 dB. However, due to the internal mechanism of the human ear and how it receives and processes noise, a sound must be nearly 10 dB higher than another sound to be judged twice as loud. Physical health, psychological well-being, social cohesion, property values and economic productivity can all be affected by excessive amounts of noise.

The effects of noise on people can be grouped into three general categories: subjective effects, such as annoyance and nuisance; interference with activities such as conversation and sleep; and physiological effects, for example, a startle or hearing loss. Adverse reactions to noise generally increase with an increase in the difference between background or ambient noise and the noise generated from a

particularly intrusive source such as a barking dog, traffic, aircraft or industrial operations. In most situations, noise control measures must reduce noise by 5 to 10 dBA in order to effectively lower the perceived sound. Therefore, loud, short duration noises from barking dogs and low-flying aircraft generally have little impact upon the CNEL levels of an area, due to the averaging techniques utilized to define CNEL.

### **Existing Community Noise Environment**

In the City of Desert Hot Springs, the primary source of noise, as in most Coachella Valley communities, is a consequence of motor vehicle traffic. The U.S. Interstate-10/Southern Pacific Railroad corridor has a substantial impact on the southern portion of the City Sphere-of-Influence. Other sources of community noise include mechanical equipment serving commercial land uses, resorts and other larger operations.

#### **Motor Vehicle Noise**

The principal noise source measured within the community is vehicular traffic, including automobiles, trucks, buses, and motorcycles. The level of noise generated by vehicular traffic generally varies according to the volume of traffic, the percentage of trucks, and average traffic speed. The tables below show the impacts of traffic and other sources at several locations in the community on local noise environments. The table also presents projected impacts expected from General Plan buildout.

#### **Interstate-10 and Southern Pacific Railroad Lines**

In addition to traffic along Highway 62 and the other major arterial roadways impacting the City, the sphere areas of the community are also impacted by rail and vehicular traffic associated with the Southern Pacific Railroad line and U.S. Interstate-10, respectively. While the passage of trains is an intrusive noise event, it occurs only periodically and is limited in duration. The influence of traffic noise of Interstate-10 is more significant and increases at night with persistent truck volumes combined with occasional atmospheric temperature inversions, which tend to reduce the acoustic attenuation typical of distance over open terrain. On a CNEL basis, the calculated combined



impacts associated with 1996 Interstate-10 and Southern Pacific RR traffic place the 65 dB and 70 dB contours at 277 feet and 117 feet north of Interstate-10, respectively.

### **Aircraft Noise**

Aircraft noise impacting the community emanates from commercial and general aviation operations at the Palm Springs International Airport, located south of the planning area. The recently updated Airport Master Plan and Part 150 Noise Compatibility Study evaluated airport operations, monitored portions of the noise environment, and projected future noise impacts from planned expansions and increased operations. Flight tracks or patterns that aircraft are assumed to follow in the noise study indicate limited overflights in Desert Hot Springs.

The tracking of flight operations associated with the airport indicate that both arrivals and departures, whether during prevailing northwest or southeast winds, bring over-flights to the edge of the City's Sphere-of-Influence along Interstate-10. The analysis conducted for the Airport Master Plan update indicates that existing and future noise levels associated with airport operations will have no significant impact on the City or its Sphere.

### **Mechanical and Industrial Noise**

In addition to noise generated by vehicular traffic, there are other noise generators within the City, which could create significant noise-related conflicts. Industrial operations related to such activities as rock crushing, construction and automotive repair can create substantial noise problems. Loading and materials transfer areas, outdoor materials warehousing operations and other acoustically unscreened operations will also raise issues of impact and compatibility. Wind turbine operations can also be expected to be potentially significant noise generators.

The operation of mechanical equipment is another important source of potentially significant noise and includes chillers, refrigerator units and heating/air conditioning equipment associated with commercial centers. Noise from roof-mounted equipment is especially effective at penetrating into adjoining neighborhoods and impacting sensitive receptors. The constant hum associated with fans and compressors can substantially impact the enjoyment of the outdoors and adversely affect the quality of life. Substantial progress has been made in noise analysis and mitigation through careful equipment design and ever improving baffling and noise cancellation technologies.

### **Noise and Land Use Compatibility**

In California and the City specifically, a CNEL of 65 dBA is used as a standard for maximum outdoor noise levels in residential areas. Typically, the noise impacts cited are "unmitigated" or have unobstructed transmission paths representing the worst case noise impact. As discussed below, a variety of design and technical options are available to substantially reduce noise impacts. The compatibility of different land uses is directly related to the user's sensitivity to noise and the potential for impacts to be mitigated.

Particularly sensitive land uses include residences, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals and nursing homes, and resort areas. In addition, parks, golf courses and other outdoor activity areas can be sensitive to noise disturbances. Less sensitive land uses include commercial and industrial uses, conventional hotels and motels, playgrounds and neighborhood ball parks, and other outdoor spectator sport arenas. Least sensitive to noise are heavy commercial and industrial uses, transportation, communication and utility land uses. Table V-2 illustrates the ranges of allowable exterior noise levels for various land uses.



**Table V-2  
Community Noise And Land Use Compatibility**

| Land Uses                                                                                                 | CNEL (dBA) |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|                                                                                                           | 50         | 55 | 60 | 65 | 70 | 75 | 80 |
| Residential Land Uses: Single & Multi-Family Dwellings, Group Quarters, Mobile Homes                      | A          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Transient Lodging: Hotels & Motels                                                                        | B          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| School Classrooms, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes & Convalescent Hospitals                 | A          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Recreation Land Uses: Golf Courses, Open Space (with walking, bicycling or horseback riding trails, etc.) | A          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Office Building, Personal Business, and Professional Services                                             | B          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Commercial Land Uses: Retail Trade, Movie Theaters, Restaurants, Bars, Entertainment Activities, Services | A          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Heavy Commercial/Industrial: Wholesale, Manufacturing, Utilities, Transportation, Communications          | B          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphi-theaters, Music Shells (may be sensitive receptors or generators)       | B          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |
| Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectacular Sports                                                                 | B          | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  | B  |

Source: Federal Highway Program Manual Vol. 7, Ch. 7, Sec. 3, 1982

**Explanatory Notes**

-  Normally Acceptable: With no special noise reduction requirements assuming standard construction.
-  Conditionally Acceptable: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirement is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.
-  Generally Unacceptable: New construction is discouraged. If new construction does proceed, a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.
-  Land Use Discouraged: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.



## Noise Measurements and Modeling: Existing and Projected Future Noise Levels

In order to understand and evaluate the impacts of land use patterns, traffic and individual developments on the noise environment, a variety of data has been collected, sites have been monitored and existing and future impacts have been modeled. Existing conditions have been specifically monitored and assessed at various areas of special focus or concern, including in the vicinity of schools, residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and along major arterial roadways. The tables below show existing and projected General Plan buildout conditions at specific locations and along major roadway segments.

Most transportation noise is highly predictable if specific data concerning operating characteristics are available. Computer models and simulations are used to calculate the noise environment along transportation routes based upon the vehicles operating characteristics and the number of vehicles utilizing that particular transportation route. These predictions, provided by existing quantitative models, have been verified by sound measurements at strategic and sensitive receptor locations in the City. The Noise Monitoring section identifies the noise monitor site locations.

Future noise impacts to the community are expected to be primarily generated by increasing traffic volumes. From the Circulation Element, we can extract the future volumes projected on major roadways. In order to make the projected traffic noise data more accurate, the average posted speed limits and a percentage mix of light and heavy truck traffic along the roadways are included in the modeling data. This information was supplied through City and CVAG traffic counts, counts prepared for intersection improvement analyses, and for General Plan traffic modeling. Computer modeling was used to estimate noise impacts due to the increased traffic volumes.

It is important to note that special attention to project-specific site design may substantially reduce noise impacts below those projected, and therefore these estimates are considered to be conservative and unmitigated. A wide range of design criteria affecting roadway engineering and traffic noise abatement include differences in final grade between the roadbed and the top of walls, spacing of intersections, parkway widths and other considerations. Table V-5 lists the 1994 and projected General Plan buildout noise contours along major City roadways.

**Table V-3  
Existing Exterior Noise Exposure Adjacent to City Roadways  
Desert Hot Springs 1994**

| Roadway                        | A.D.T. <sup>1</sup><br>(Veh/Day) | CNEL <sup>2</sup> | Distance to Contours<br>(FT) <sup>3</sup> |        |        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                                |                                  |                   | 70 dBA                                    | 65 dBA | 60 dBA |
| <b>Mission Lakes Boulevard</b> |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| East of Indian Avenue          | 2,200                            | 60.5              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 112    |
| West of West Drive             | 2,400                            | 58.6              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 73     |
| <b>Pierson Boulevard</b>       |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| West of State Route 62         | 200                              | 50.1              | R/W                                       | R/W    | R/W    |
| East of State Route 62         | 1,100                            | 57.5              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 56     |
| West of Indian Avenue          | 2,100                            | 60.3              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 107    |
| East of Indian Avenue          | 4,100                            | 63.2              | R/W                                       | 66     | 209    |



**Table V-3**  
**Existing Exterior Noise Exposure Adjacent to City Roadways**  
**Desert Hot Springs 1994**

| Roadway                        | A.D.T. <sup>1</sup><br>(Veh/Day) | CNEL <sup>2</sup> | Distance to Contours<br>(FT) <sup>3</sup> |        |        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                                |                                  |                   | 70 dBA                                    | 65 dBA | 60 dBA |
| West of Little Morongo Road    | 4,300                            | 65.1              | R/W                                       | 102    | 315    |
| East of Little Morongo Road    | 5,500                            | 66.2              | R/W                                       | 130    | 405    |
| West of West Drive             | 6,000                            | 64.8              | R/W                                       | 96     | 294    |
| West of Cactus Drive           | 6,400                            | 63.2              | R/W                                       | 68     | 204    |
| West of Palm Drive             | 7,000                            | 63.6              | R/W                                       | 74     | 224    |
| East of Palm Drive             | 5,200                            | 62.3              | R/W                                       | 57     | 167    |
| <b>Hacienda Avenue</b>         |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| West of Palm Drive             | 3,400                            | 61.5              | R/W                                       | 50     | 139    |
| East of Palm Drive             | 6,000                            | 63.9              | R/W                                       | 79     | 240    |
| East of Ocotillo Road          | 6,700                            | 63.0              | R/W                                       | 63     | 199    |
| East of Mesquite Avenue        | 6,700                            | 63.0              | R/W                                       | 63     | 199    |
| West of Miracle Hill Road      | 5,800                            | 62.4              | R/W                                       | 55     | 174    |
| West of Mountain View Road     | 6,500                            | 62.9              | R/W                                       | 62     | 195    |
| East of Mountain View Road     | 4,900                            | 61.7              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 148    |
| West of City Limits            | 1,900                            | 54.9              | R/W                                       | R/W    | R/W    |
| <b>Two Bunch Palms Trail</b>   |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| West of Palm Drive             | 6,700                            | 63.4              | R/W                                       | 71     | 214    |
| East of Palm Drive             | 6,100                            | 59.9              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 98     |
| <b>State Route 62</b>          |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Pierson Boulevard     | 19,000                           | 71.7              | 144                                       | 446    | 1407   |
| South of Pierson Boulevard     | 15,000                           | 70.6              | 113                                       | 347    | 1092   |
| <b>Indian Avenue</b>           |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Mission Lakes Blvd.   | 6,000                            | 64.8              | R/W                                       | 96     | 302    |
| North of Pierson Boulevard     | 7,000                            | 65.5              | R/W                                       | 112    | 354    |
| South of Pierson Boulevard     | 8,300                            | 66.2              | R/W                                       | 132    | 416    |
| <b>Little Morongo Road</b>     |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Pierson Boulevard     | 2,100                            | 60.3              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 107    |
| South of Pierson Boulevard     | 1,900                            | 59.8              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 96     |
| South of Two Bunch Palms Trail | 3,000                            | 61.8              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 151    |
| <b>West Drive</b>              |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Pierson Boulevard     | 3,700                            | 57.8              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 60     |
| South of Pierson Boulevard     | 3,400                            | 57.4              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 55     |



**Table V-3**  
**Existing Exterior Noise Exposure Adjacent to City Roadways**  
**Desert Hot Springs 1994**

| Roadway                        | A.D.T. <sup>1</sup><br>(Veh/Day) | CNEL <sup>2</sup> | Distance to Contours<br>(FT) <sup>3</sup> |        |        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                                |                                  |                   | 70 dBA                                    | 65 dBA | 60 dBA |
| Palm Drive                     |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Eighth Street         | 6,300                            | 64.1              | R/W                                       | 82     | 253    |
| North of Pierson Boulevard     | 10,500                           | 66.3              | R/W                                       | 133    | 415    |
| South of Pierson Boulevard     | 14,600                           | 66.8              | 52                                        | 149    | 465    |
| North of Hacienda Avenue       | 18,800                           | 67.9              | 64                                        | 191    | 599    |
| South of Hacienda Avenue       | 18,800                           | 69.8              | 96                                        | 294    | 927    |
| South of Two Bunch Palms Trail | 20,600                           | 70.2              | 104                                       | 322    | 1017   |
| North of City Limits           | 23,400                           | 70.6              | 115                                       | 362    | 1146   |
| Miracle Hill Road              |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Hacienda Avenue       | 1,000                            | 52.1              | R/W                                       | R/W    | R/W    |
| South of Hacienda Avenue       | 400                              | 48.1              | R/W                                       | R/W    | R/W    |
| Mountain View Road             |                                  |                   |                                           |        |        |
| North of Hacienda Avenue       | 1,400                            | 53.5              | R/W                                       | R/W    | R/W    |
| South of Hacienda Avenue       | 4,400                            | 58.5              | R/W                                       | R/W    | 71     |

Notes: 1. A.D.T. Means current average daily two-way traffic volume.

2. CNEL values are given at 100 feet from roadway centerlines (see Appendix E for assumptions).

3. All distances are measured from centerline. R/W means the contour falls within the right-of-way.

Source: Endo Engineering, 1994.

### General Plan Monitoring Sites

Noise measurements were taken at six selected locations, primarily to address principal land use compatibility questions associated with the updating of the General Plan. Sites included major transportation corridors, land use transition areas, sensitive receptors and residential neighborhoods. Monitoring was conducted during the day and nighttime hours in 1994. Each of the sites monitored is briefly described below.

- 1.) Single Family Residence/NW Corner of Hacienda Ave and Ocotillo Road
- 2.) Corsini Elementary School/Hacienda Avenue
- 3.) Motel/Palm Drive South of Hacienda Avenue

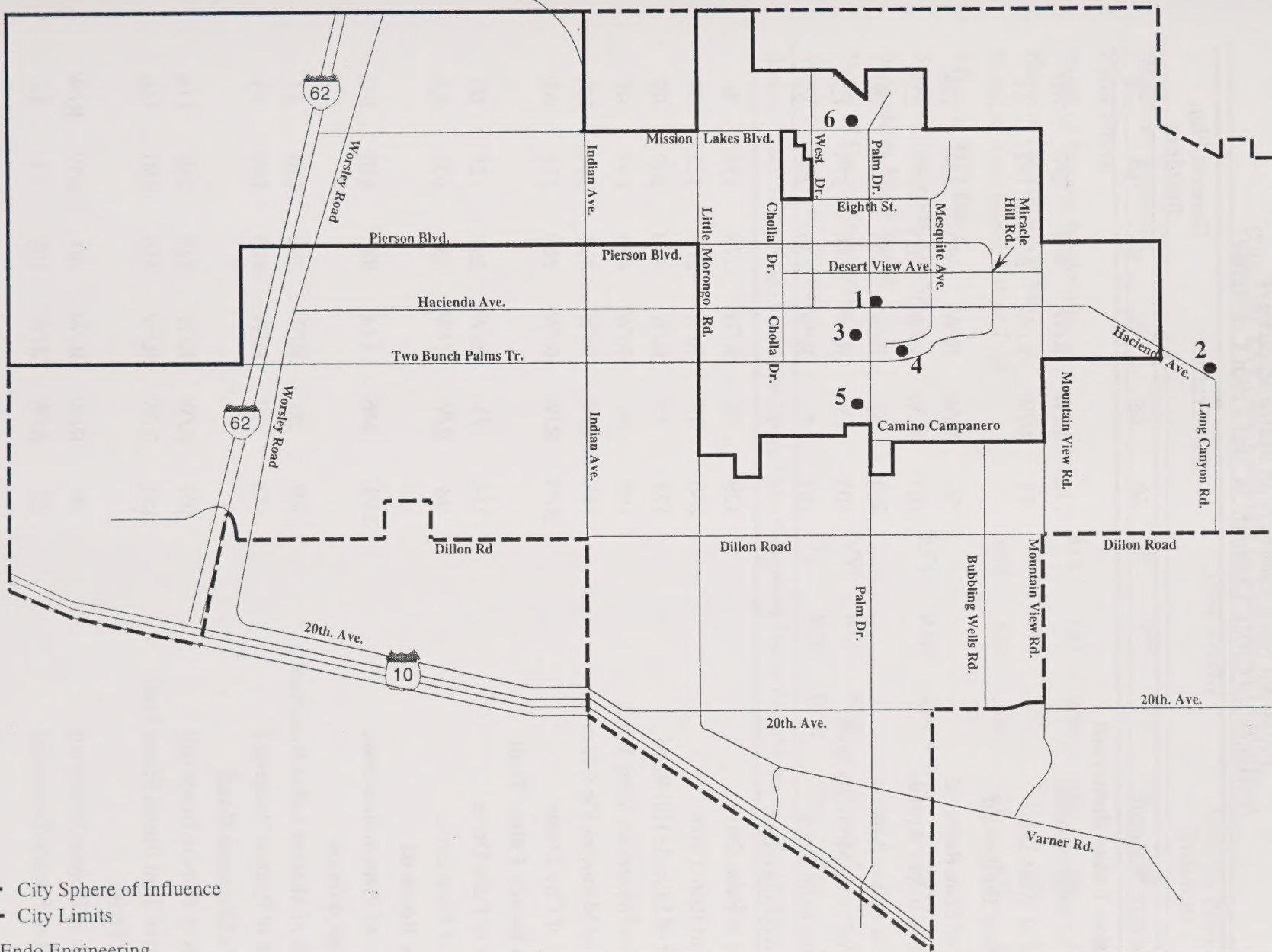
- 4.) Desert Springs Middle School/Two Bunch Palms Trail
- 5.) Sky's Haven Mobilehome Park/Palm Drive
- 6.) Single Family Residence/Mission Lakes Boulevard



**Table: V-4**  
**Noise Monitoring at Selected Sites**  
**Locations and CNEL Values (1994)**

| <b>Location</b>                  | <b>Distance to Centerline (FT)</b> | <b>CNEL</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1). Single Family Residence      | 61                                 | 61.6        |
| 2). Corsini Elementary School    | 85                                 | 54.1        |
| 3). Motel                        | 63                                 | 66.4        |
| 4). Desert Springs Middle School | 54                                 | 60.4        |
| 5). Sky's Haven Mobilehome Park  | 38                                 | 72.4        |
| 6). Single Family Residence      | 69                                 | 58.1        |





--- City Sphere of Influence  
 — City Limits

Source: Endo Engineering





**Table:V-5**  
**1994 and General Plan Buildout**  
**Projected Noise Contours on Major Roadways**  
**(Distance To CNEL Contours in Feet From Centerline)**

| Roadway Segment                  | 1994 Traffic |     |     | General Plan Buildout |     |     |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----------------------|-----|-----|
|                                  | 60           | 65  | 70  | 60                    | 65  | 70  |
| <b>Mission Lakes Boulevard</b>   |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| East of Indian Avenue            | 112          | R/W | R/W | 492                   | 230 | 109 |
| West of West Drive               | 73           | R/W | R/W | 357                   | 167 | 81  |
| <b>Pierson Boulevard</b>         |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| East of State Route 62           | 56           | R/W | R/W | 695                   | 324 | 154 |
| West of Indian Avenue            | 107          | R/W | R/W | 1019                  | 474 | 223 |
| East of Indian Avenue            | 209          | 66  | R/W | 738                   | 343 | 161 |
| East of Little Morongo Road      | 405          | 130 | R/W | 586                   | 273 | 129 |
| East of Palm Drive               | 167          | 57  | R/W | 435                   | 203 | 97  |
| <b>Hacienda Avenue</b>           |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| West of Palm Drive               | 139          | 50  | R/W | 379                   | 178 | 86  |
| East of Palm Drive               | 240          | 79  | R/W | 263                   | 123 | 59  |
| West of Miracle Hill Road        | 174          | 55  | R/W | 450                   | 209 | 99  |
| West of Mountain View Road       | 195          | 62  | R/W | 423                   | 197 | 93  |
| East of Mountain View Road       | 148          | R/W | R/W | 471                   | 219 | 103 |
| West of City Limits              | R/W          | R/W | R/W | 369                   | 172 | 81  |
| <b>Two Bunch Palms Trail</b>     |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| West of Palm Drive               | 214          | 71  | R/W | 267                   | 125 | 60  |
| East of Palm Drive               | 98           | R/W | R/W | 233                   | 109 | 53  |
| <b>State Route 62</b>            |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| North of Pierson Boulevard       | 1407         | 446 | 144 | 881                   | 410 | 192 |
| <b>Indian Avenue</b>             |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| North of Mission Lakes Boulevard | 302          | 96  | R/W | 382                   | 179 | 87  |
| North of Pierson Boulevard       | 354          | 112 | R/W | 419                   | 196 | 95  |
| <b>Little Morongo Road</b>       |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| North of Pierson Boulevard       | 107          | R/W | R/W | 515                   | 240 | 114 |
| South of Two Bunch Palms Trail   | 151          | R/W | R/W | 750                   | 350 | 166 |
| <b>West Drive</b>                |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| North of Pierson Boulevard       | 60           | R/W | R/W | 60                    | R/W | R/W |
| South of Pierson Boulevard       | 55           | R/W | R/W | 197                   | 93  | 46  |



**Table:V-5**  
**1994 and General Plan Buildout**  
**Projected Noise Contours on Major Roadways**  
**(Distance To CNEL Contours in Feet From Centerline)**

| Roadway Segment                | 1994 Traffic |     |     | General Plan Buildout |     |     |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----------------------|-----|-----|
|                                | 60           | 65  | 70  | 60                    | 65  | 70  |
| <b>Palm Drive</b>              |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| North of Pierson Boulevard     | 415          | 133 | R/W | 429                   | 200 | 96  |
| North of Hacienda Avenue       | 599          | 191 | 64  | 520                   | 243 | 118 |
| South of Two Bunch Palms Trail | 1017         | 322 | 104 | 874                   | 407 | 192 |
| <b>Miracle Hill Road</b>       |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| South of Hacienda Avenue       | R/W          | R/W | R/W | 141                   | 67  | 35  |
| <b>Mountain View Road</b>      |              |     |     |                       |     |     |
| North of Hacienda Avenue       | R/W          | R/W | R/W | 293                   | 137 | 66  |
| South of Hacienda Avenue       | 71           | R/W | R/W | 233                   | 109 | 53  |

Source: "Desert Hot Springs General Plan Update Noise Background Study," Endo Engineering, March 2000.



## Managing the Noise Environment

There are a variety of strategies available for managing the City's noise environment and preserving those qualities of peace and quiet that are essential and highly valued community assets. Land use planning, transportation planning, project design mitigation, simple and sophisticated technical fixes, and acoustical barriers are applied to community noise compatibility issues and should be approached in this order.

In areas subject to significant or potentially significant noise impacts, site planning and design standards are geared to provide direct and integrated noise impact mitigation. Applied mitigation measures include the use of buffer zones consisting of earthen berms, walls and landscaping between sensitive land uses and roadways and other noise sources. In addition, site planning and building orientation can provide shielding of outdoor living spaces, and orient operable windows away from roadways. Effective acoustical materials can also be incorporated into building windows and walls which adequately reduce outdoor noise.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Generally, the City of Desert Hot Springs enjoys a quiet noise environment consistent with its character as a spa resort and residential community. The City is, however, most notably impacted by major roadway noise sources. Future efforts in this regard should focus on the preservation of the peaceful and quiet atmosphere that residents and visitors to the community now enjoy.

Existing and future noise abatement and mitigation will have varying levels of effectiveness, depending upon the noise type and its source, site conditions, geography and land uses. Noise issues have been carefully considered in the development of the Land Use Element and land use distributions. Zoning designations provide another level of land use control, which assures appropriate uses near significant noise sources, and development standards and guidelines that will reduce impacts and enhance compatibility.

The Circulation Element has also been designed, where possible, to protect the City's residential areas from excessive traffic noise and to assure compatible noise levels.

## NOISE ELEMENT GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

### GOAL

A noise environment providing peace and quiet that complements and is consistent with the City's spa resort and residential character and the various mix of land uses comprising the community.

### Policy 1

The potential of land use patterns, associated traffic and its distribution, and individual development shall be assessed for their potential to generate adverse and incompatible noise impacts, and significant impacts identified shall be appropriately mitigated.

### Program 1 A

Draft and adopt a City Noise Ordinance to include noise exposure thresholds triggering project-specific noise impact studies. Provide development standards and project design guidelines, which include a variety of mitigation measures which can be applied to meet City standards.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council  
**Schedule:** 2001

### Program 1 B

Provide an outline of minimal requirements for noise studies for future development projects. Studies shall analyze project impacts and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department  
**Schedule:** 2001 Continuous.

### Policy 2

Protect noise sensitive land uses, including residences, resorts and community open space, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals and convalescent homes from high noise levels from both existing and future noise sources.



### **Program 2 A**

Establish and periodically update an inventory of existing significant noise sources and incompatibility areas, and develop procedures to reduce the noise effects on these areas, where economically and aesthetically feasible.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** 2006; Every five years.

### **Program 2 B**

On a project-specific basis, require the installation of soundwalls, earthen berms, wall and window noise insulation and other mitigation measures in areas exceeding the City's noise limit standards.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 2 C**

Verify projected noise levels through noise monitoring at locations adjacent to residential and other noise sensitive areas where traffic volumes have increased by more than 30%.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Event of appropriate traffic volume increases.

### **Program 2 D**

Develop a parkway master plan for undeveloped portions of Palm Drive, Mission Lakes Boulevard, Pierson Boulevard, Two Bunch Palms Trail and other major roadways likely to have adjoining sensitive land uses. Master plans shall reflect and utilize differences in elevation, increased parkway width, mounding and/or berming, acoustically effective walls and cohesive landscape planning to address noise compatibility, and other goals and policies. Facilitate the establishment of an equitably based assessment district or other appropriate financing mechanism for project design, development and maintenance.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, Public Works Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** 2001-02

### **Policy 3**

Project designs shall be required to include measures which assure that interior noise levels for residential development do not to exceed 45 CNEL, as required by Title 25 (California Noise Insulation Standards).

### **Program 3 A**

In areas subject to potentially significant noise impacts, the City shall require new development to monitor and document compliance with all applicable noise level limits.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Project-specific

### **Policy 4**

Land uses that are compatible with higher noise levels shall be located adjacent to the City's major arterial roads and highways, Interstate-10 corridor, or designated industrial lands in order to maximize noise related land use compatibility.

### **Program 4 A**

Periodically review land use patterns and the community noise environment, and amend the Land Use map as appropriate to assure reasonable land use/noise compatibility.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Review every five years.

### **Policy 5**

Develop and maintain a circulation plan that is consistent with the spa resort and residential character of the City, avoids impacts to existing and planned sensitive receptors/uses, and which provides fixed routes for existing and future truck traffic.

### **Program 5 A**

Encourage a City-wide circulation pattern which places primary traffic loads on major arterials and preserves local neighborhood noise environments by controlling traffic speeds, limiting roadways to local traffic and minimum speeds to the greatest extent practical.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department;

**Schedule:** Update every five years.



### **Program 5 B**

Designate primary truck routes and clearly mark these routes through the City. Other than vehicles providing local service, construction traffic, and delivery truck through-traffic shall be limited to Palm Drive, Dillon Road, Two Bunch Palms Trail, Pierson Boulevard, Highway 62 and Interstate-10.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Update every five years.

### **Policy 6**

The City shall assure that noise impacts from existing and future windfarm development shall be kept at a level compatible with residential and other sensitive land uses.

### **Program 6 A**

The City shall require that applications for windfarm development (WECS: Wind Energy Conservation Systems) include technical data on noise generation and projected noise contours. Following installation, noise monitoring shall be performed in conformance with requirements of the City, with adverse impacts to be fully mitigated.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; county Environmental Health

**Schedule:** Immediately/ Continuous.



# HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element identifies existing hazardous and toxic material locations in the community, and describes the regulatory environment established to safely manage these materials. The aim of this element is to uphold the City's concern and planning for the protection of all Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors from adverse health and other impacts due to the presence of hazardous and toxic materials. Goals, policies and programs are set forth in this element that will help assure an effective response to the use, storage, or transport of hazardous and toxic materials in the City of Desert Hot Springs, and help ensure the general health, safety and welfare of the community from possible impacts associated with these materials.

## BACKGROUND

The Air Quality and Water Resources Elements are directly related to the Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element, as policies implemented for hazardous and toxic waste management will have an effect on preservation of clean air and protection against water resource contamination. It is also related to the Land Use Element and land uses, with the potential of hazardous or toxic materials and their storage or disposal undermining land use compatibility. The Emergency Preparedness Element has a direct relationship to the emergency management of these materials and their potential adverse impacts on the community as a result of spillage or upset. Resources addressed by the Biological Resources Element may also be affected by the improper management of these materials, especially herbicides and pesticides. The Fire and Police Protection Element also has a relationship to this element.

It is mandated by California Government Code Section 65302(g) that the General Plan of a community address safety issues, including but not limited to hazardous materials. Modern industrial society has generated a wealth of

materials and technologies that have improved our quality of life but have also introduced new and potentially hazardous materials, which must be carefully managed. This element discusses various issues associated with these hazardous and toxic materials and provides background information on how these materials are to be managed and disposed of. Most hazardous materials problems in the area are associated with leaking fuel storage tanks, emissions from industrial and commercial solvents and coatings, pesticide and herbicide use, and chemical and nuclear wastes generated by medical facilities. Control and regulation of hazardous and toxic materials rests largely with county, state and federal agencies.

In the City of Desert Hot Springs, there are only a few identified hazardous/toxic material generators associated with commercial, and quasi-industrial and medical operations, which have the potential to be associated with accidental spills, purposeful illegal dumping, air emission, and other uncontrolled discharges into the environment. The improper use and management of these materials by service stations, petroleum product and equipment suppliers, pesticide vendors and users, automotive dealers, medical practitioners, hospitals and clinics pose a significant potential threat to the community and its environment.

A wide variety of products, chemical and purified chemical compounds, and elements that are considered hazardous or toxic are used in households, commercial businesses and industrial operations and processes. They range through home and pool related chlorine products, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, stored fuels and waste oil, chemical solvents and lubricants, and a variety of medical materials. All are considered "small quantity generators" and some of those identified in the City include the Mission Springs Water District, Mission Lakes Country Club, and Caliente Springs Hotel.



## **Community Hazardous Wastes Risks**

Currently, there are several potentially hazardous waste sites that are generally restricted to the above-mentioned and regulated "small quantity generators". In addition to these mentioned above, there are other sites that have been or should be monitored. These include other waste-generating medical clinics and facilities, gasoline service stations, equipment and fuel storage yards, and waste haulers.

Known or identified underground fuel storage occurring at locations in the City, where leakage would pose the most significant hazard, include the City Corporate Yard, Edwards Enterprises, Landells Aviation and Roesch Lines. The U.S.EPA requires all service stations to retrofit or replace underground storage tanks with double-walled construction. Several sites in the City have already complied with this rule. In the City Sphere-of-Influence various industrial activities, including machining, wind turbine servicing, and materials research, also have the potential for uncontrolled discharge of hazardous materials.

## **Hazardous Waste and Sewage Disposal**

One area of recent concern in the Coachella Valley and the Desert Hot Springs area has been the impact of long-term septic tank use on groundwater resources. Contamination problems have not been particularly evident, although impacts on the lower portion of alluvial cones with extensive upslope residential development are areas of concern, and on Mission Springs Water District well has already been somewhat impacted by nearby septic tank use. (also see the Water Resources Element). The use of septic tanks in these generally porous soils and on sloping gradients can result in concentrated flows of effluent to the lower portions of these areas and can result in contamination of the water table. Septic tanks are still widely in use in Desert Hot Springs and their use will continue to pose varying threats to ground water.

## **Hazardous Waste Management Plans**

The City of Desert Hot Springs has the opportunity to coordinate with appropriate county, state and federal agencies in the

identification of hazardous material sites, and the active regulation of their timely cleanup. Management strategies may include establishing and maintaining information on these sites, periodic monitoring facilities and operations that produce, utilize or store hazardous materials in the City. Involvement in multi-agency monitoring of illegal dumping in the City, conferring in the regulation of underground storage tanks and septic systems, and regulating the transport of hazardous materials through the community is also appropriate.

AB 2948 (Chapter 1504, Statutes of 1986), commonly known as the Tanner Bill, authorizes counties to prepare Hazardous Waste Management Plans (HWMP) in response to the need for safe management of hazardous materials and waste products. The Riverside County HWMP was adopted by the Board of Supervisors and approved by the California Department of Health Services in 1990. The County HWMP identifies the types and amounts of wastes generated in the County and establishes programs for managing these wastes.

In order to comply with Health and Safety Code Section 25135, the Riverside County HWMP assures that adequate treatment and disposal capacity is available to manage the hazardous wastes generated within the jurisdiction, and addresses issues related to manufacture and use. This plan was developed jointly by the County, Desert Hot Springs and other cities within the County, the State, the public and industry to address the disposal, handling, processing, storage and treatment of local hazardous materials and waste products.

Preparation of the HWMP included extensive public participation. Its policies call for the coordination of County efforts with state and federal agencies in the identification and establishment of programs for managing these wastes. As an integral part of the County HWMP, the City of Desert Hot Springs hazardous waste management policies for the General Plan are essentially extensions of the County Plan and are hereby incorporated by reference. Currently (2000), there are several sources of information concerning hazardous waste sites in the City of Desert Hot Springs area.



The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB), as well as the Coachella Valley Water District, maintain information concerning contaminated wells and groundwater. The state and federal Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA), and the State Department of Health also supply information concerning specific hazardous waste sites and their locations. Private database screening and documentation services are also available, which will search, extract, and summarize reports on contaminated sites recorded in various state and federal databases.

### **Hazardous Materials Response**

Hazardous and toxic materials are determined critical by the County Department of Health, and the County and the City can require property owners to test, temporarily close and/or remove all hazardous liquids, solids or sludge located on the site. Leaking underground storage tanks must be removed by contractors having Hazardous Waste Certification and a General Engineering license. Between cessation of storage and actual closure, monitoring is generally required by the site's operating permit. When soils contamination is detected, the clean up procedure to be followed, the degree or level of cleanliness required by the regulator, and the method of treatment (if permitted) will be directed by the County Health Hazardous Materials Division and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The City of Desert Hot Springs has the opportunity to coordinate with appropriate county, state and federal agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites, and the active regulation of their timely cleanup. The Riverside County Fire Station #37, located within the city limits, has the capacity of authority as a First Response Team; the agency responsible for the Hazardous Response Plan is the County of Riverside Health Hazardous Materials Division and/or the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City of Desert Hot Springs has the responsibility to coordinate with the appropriate agencies in the identification of hazardous material sites, and the active regulation of their timely cleanup. This element can most efficiently be implemented through regular consultation with the RWQCB and the County Health Department and by updating information on hazardous material sites, monitoring facilities that utilize or produce hazardous materials within the City. The City should also remain current regarding the monitoring and regulating of underground storage tanks and septic systems, and regulating the transport of hazardous materials through the community.

A carefully coordinated program of oversight and management between responsible agencies will be essential. Regular consultation and coordination between the City Emergency Preparedness Director and responsible county and state agencies is also appropriate. Processes for determining appropriate levels of local, County and State personnel and facilities will also be critical. The goal, policies and programs of this element help to direct the planning and development of appropriate strategies to address hazardous and toxic materials in the community.

### **HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

#### **GOAL**

The assured safety of City of Desert Hot Springs residents and visitors through the regulation of the manufacture, transport, use and disposal of toxic and hazardous materials.

#### **Policy 1**

Compile and maintain an inventory of all hazardous waste sites, and regulate, to the extent empowered, the delivery, use and storage of hazardous materials within the City limits and General Plan study area.



### **Program 1 A**

Confer with the appropriate WQCB responsible agencies to determine the need for, and the appropriateness of, developing a permitting process for the establishment of facilities which manufacture, store, use or dispose of hazardous and toxic materials within the community or adjacent areas.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County and State Health Departments; CRWQCB

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 1 B**

Proactively monitor and comment on the use, clean-up and re-use of existing hazardous materials sites within the General Plan study area.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous

### **Policy 2**

Pro-actively encourage and facilitate the safe and immediate cleanup of all existing and future hazardous waste sites within the City of Desert Hot Springs and General Plan study area.

### **Program 2 A**

Coordinate with the appropriate state and federal agencies to activate procedures for the cleanup of existing and future hazardous and toxic waste sites within the Desert Hot Springs limits and its SOI.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; State and federal EPA, County Health Department; CRWQCB

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Policy 3**

Require and facilitate the safe and responsible disposal of all hazardous and/or toxic wastes in compliance with existing federal, state and county regulations.

### **Program 3 A**

Whenever possible, encourage the development and/or use of innovative and safe chemical compounds, technologies and facilities.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 3 B**

Update and/or disseminate information and instructive education program materials for

residents, including direction on the identification and proper management of household hazardous waste.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County Health Department; Valley Disposal; MSWD

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous.

### **Program 3 C**

To the extent empowered, prohibit the disposal of automotive and household hazardous and toxic materials in landfills.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County Health Department; Valley Disposal

**Schedule:** Continuous.

### **Program 3 D**

Coordinate with Valley Disposal and other appropriate public and quasi-public agencies to sponsor and develop drop-off locations in Desert Hot Springs for hazardous or toxic household products for all Desert Hot Springs residents.

**Responsible Agency:** Administrative Services Department; Valley Disposal; other appropriate agencies

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 4**

Coordinate with the Fire and Police Departments to develop a system for roadway management and for alerting emergency and medical facilities to the impending transport of hazardous and toxic materials.

### **Program 4 A**

Coordinate with appropriate departments and agencies to establish transportation management and contingency emergency procedures and training programs for police, fire, medical and other organizations that would be involved in an airborne release or ground spill of hazardous and toxic materials or waste.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Emergency Preparedness Director; Riverside County Fire Department; Sheriff's Department; CalTrans

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 5**

Confer, cooperate and coordinate with the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Mission Springs Water District to monitor and regulate the use and phased removal of on-site subsurface sewage disposal systems.



#### **Program 5 A**

Through the subdivision and/or development review process, the City shall encourage and/or require, to the greatest extent practical, the connection of new development to the sewage collection system of the Mission Springs Water District.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; MSWD; Regional Water Quality Control Board

**Schedule:** 2001-02;Continuous.

#### **Program 5 B**

Cooperate with the Mission Springs Water District to help assure that all on-site sewage disposal systems, upon completion of their use, are properly removed from service in accordance with the requirements of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and other regulating agencies.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; MSWD; Regional Water Quality Control Board

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 6**

Identify the location and monitor the use of all underground fuel storage tanks located within the City limits with the potential to release hazardous or toxic materials into the environment.

#### **Program 6 A**

Coordinate with appropriate agencies in the enforcement of state and federal regulations for the testing, monitoring and remediation of underground fuel storage tanks for leakage.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County Health Department; State EPA

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Policy 7**

Actively oppose any plan or attempt to establish hazardous and toxic waste dumps/landfills or hazardous industrial processes with the potential to adversely affect the community or the City's SOL.

#### **Program 7 A**

Coordinate with CVAG and its member cities to actively organize against and oppose any county, state, federal or private effort to build and/or operate hazardous or toxic waste dumps/landfills or to operate hazardous industrial processes, which cannot be mitigated and have the potential to adversely affect the City or its SOL.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; Planning Commission; City Council

**Schedule:** Continuous.







# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER VI**

#### **PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

This chapter of the General Plan addresses the public services and facilities needed to support development in the City of Desert Hot Springs. General Plan elements found in this chapter that discuss these services and facilities include Water, Sewer and Utilities, Fire and Police Protection, Schools and Libraries, Health Services, Emergency Preparedness, and Public Building and Facilities. The levels of service needed for residential, commercial and industrial development is directly related to the intensity of development in the community. The economic life of the City is tied to the level of services, the types and intensities of land use, and the levels of demand for services and the revenue generating potential of urbanizing areas.







# WATER, SEWER AND UTILITIES ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

This element establishes City policy for and provides a coordinated system of domestic water, sewage treatment and utility services. The provision of these services is essential for orderly growth and development of the community. Infrastructure types and utility services discussed here include potable and irrigation water, sanitary sewage, natural gas, electricity and telephone. This element institutes policies for these services in order to adequately serve the City at full build out, identify standards for infrastructure relative to population or land use intensity, and identifies courses of action and programs which implement the Goals and Policies.

## BACKGROUND

The Water, Sewer and Utilities Element is directly related to the Land Use Element in that new development must be planned with the extension and availability of essential infrastructure. Other related elements include Water and Energy Resources, and Flooding and Hydrology. California Government Code Section 65302(d) provides for the General Plan to address the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including water. Related to the conservation and utilization of this natural resource is waste water (sewage) treatment and natural gas and electricity availability. This Element satisfies, in part, the requirement for a Conservation Element, while also addressing other utilities as allowed by Section 65303.

California Government Code Section 65103(c) requires that the planning agency "annually review the capital improvement program of the city and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan."

This Element of the General Plan provides an effective and meaningful framework from which to comply with state law.

## Domestic Water

Domestic water services are provided in the City and its sphere area by the Mission Springs Water District (MSWD) and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD). MSWD supplies the existing City of Desert Hot Springs and most of its sphere area, south to Dillon Road. CVWD's boundary lies in an area south of 20th Avenue, and a small area west of Mountain View. Both the MSWD and CVWD utilize deep wells to extract groundwater from the Mission Creek and Garnet subbasins. MSWD's domestic water system serving the City includes 7 wells, 20 above ground storage reservoirs ranging in capacity from .055 million to 2.5 million gallons, and an extensive system of distribution lines ranging in size from 4 to 16 inches in diameter. Water well depths range between 400 and 1,085 feet (also see the Water Resources Element).

The Mission Creek Subbasin serves as the groundwater repository for the Desert Hot Springs area, encompasses approximately 33 square miles and lies between the Desert Hot Springs subbasin on the north and the Garnet Hill subbasin on the south. The boundaries of the Mission Creek subbasin are formed by the Mission Creek fault on the north, and the Banning fault on the south. Hydrogeological investigations in 1979 indicated that the southeastern portion of the Mission Creek subbasin was estimated to have approximately 724,000 acre feet in storage (1 acre foot equals about 327,000 gallons). The groundwater in storage for the entire subbasin was estimated at 1.45 million acre feet. It has an overall storage capacity of 2.6 million. Some groundwater recharge comes from natural sources, such as the infiltration of runoff from the San Bernardino and Little



San Bernardino Mountains. Currently no Colorado River or other water from state projects is used to recharge the basins. However, because of prevailing overdraft conditions in the Mission Creek subbasin, Desert Water Agency (DWA) and the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) have contracted with the State of California to recharge the basin through the Metropolitan Water District's Colorado River Aqueduct, which passes through the western end of the city limits. Construction of a turnout is currently underway, and the recharge program will use approximately 180 acres that have been secured for development of a spreading basin. Completion of the project is estimated to be mid-1999. Approximately 5,000 acre feet per year will be discharged into the spreading basin.

Regulation of drinking water quality is provided by the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, amended in 1986.

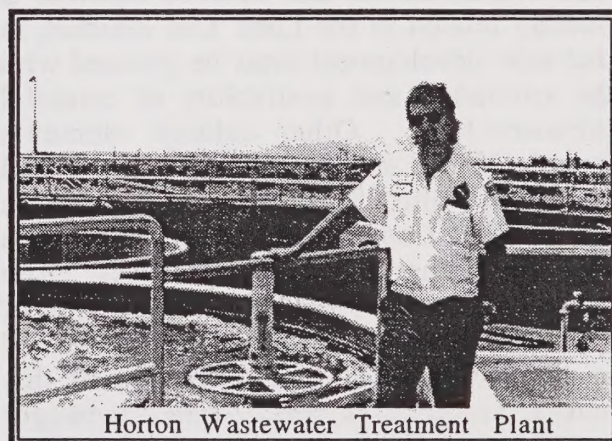
Due to the complexity of the groundwater basins serving the City, the varying rates of natural recharge and the flow of groundwater into and out of the Mission Creek subbasin from flows across the Mission Creek and Banning faults, respectively, it is unclear whether and to what extent this subbasin is in an overdraft condition. Further research is being conducted by the District.

Major natural sources of groundwater recharge include infiltration of runoff from the San Bernardino Mountains through the drainage of Mission Creek and other mountain drainages. The Little San Bernardino Mountains through the drainage networks of Big Morongo Canyon, Little Morongo Canyon and Long Canyon, and smaller channels; inflow from the Desert Hot Springs subbasin; and returns from sewage effluent and excess irrigation. According to DWR (1964, pp. 106-107), in desert areas where average annual rainfall is less than 12 inches (Desert Hot Springs averages 5 inches) deep percolation of precipitation is negligible.

Continued increases in demand generated by residential, commercial, and golf course development will have significant long-term cumulative impacts on the groundwater supply. While the planned provision of recharge water will reduce the rates of overdraft, development in the City and Coachella Valley is expected to continue to reduce the amount of potable groundwater in storage. The City has adopted an ordinance to require water conserving landscape design including the use of native desert plants, drought resistant landscaping, and efficient irrigation technology in private and public landscaping applications.

The District is involved in a variety of efforts to conserve finite ground water resources. In addition to the provision of domestic water, MSWD provides landscape plan checking services and publications on the design and installation of drought tolerant landscaping.

## **Waste Water Treatment**



Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant

Mission Springs Water District provides waste water treatment for the planning area at two treatment plants. The Horton Wastewater Treatment Plant, located on Verbena Road, has a capacity of one million gallons per day (gpd), and is currently handling about 90 percent of its design flow. The district has completed plans for an expansion of the plant which will increase its capacity to 2 million gpd. Expansion is expected to be in October 2000 and should be completed within two years.



The District's Desert Crest Wastewater Treatment Plant is located on Sunrise Road. The plant has a capacity of 180,000 gpd, and it is currently treating about one-third of its total capacity. Although there are no plans for immediate expansion, long-term expansion of the plant is being considered and will be implemented as demand warrants.

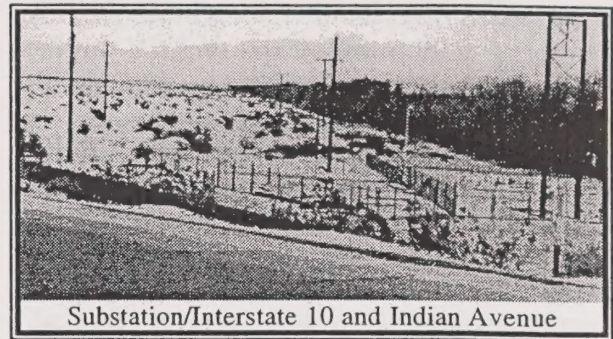
In March 2000, there were about 5,000 septic tank systems in operation within the District boundaries, including the city limits and SOI. Areas within the City range from 1.6 to 2 septic systems per acre, while at Mission Lakes Country Club these systems occur at a density of 2.4 per acre. The recommended density of these systems in the planning area is about 0.7 systems per acre (also see the Water Resources Element).

A limited portion of the planning area is located within the service area of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD). Lands generally located east of Little Morongo Road and south of Dillon Road are included in CVWD's Improvement District #58. Development in this area is sparse and largely limited to scattered residences. At this time, there are no CVWD wastewater facilities in the area.

CVWD has indicated that it will be capable of providing wastewater collection facilities in this portion of the planning area as additional development occurs and the demand for facilities increases. Wastewater will be conveyed and discharged into existing sewer mains in Thousand Palms, where it will be gravity fed to the Improvement District #58 Water Reclamation Plant (WRP-7) in Indio. This plant currently has a capacity of 2.5 mgd and treats about 2 mgd. Expansion of the plant to 5 mgd is currently (year 2000) underway and is expected to be completed within one year.

## Electric Service

Electric power services are provided by the Southern California Edison Company (SCE).



SCE has 2 transmission substations within the Desert Hot Springs sphere-of-influence. Electric power is primarily generated outside the Coachella Valley, however, SCE purchases wind generated power from local producers. SCE facilities include 12 kv transmission lines for local distribution. Higher voltage lines for more distant transmission range up to 115 kv and 230 kv lines. Substations step down voltage for local distribution and use. Desert Hot Springs is served by the Devers Substation, north of Dillon Road in the southwestern portion of the City's SOI, and the Coffee Substation, located on Camino Aventura west of Palm Drive, just south of the city limits.

On average, the typical residential electric consumer uses approximately 6,000 kilowatt hours per year. The higher summer temperatures in the Coachella Valley substantially increase the demand for electricity for air conditioning, and costs associated with this service are also significant.

SCE also offers various rebates for installation of energy efficient equipment, including refunds for the replacement of "through the wall" heat pumps; installation or replacement of a central electric heat pump; installation or replacement of a central air-conditioning unit; replacement of a central electric heat pump, and others. Another program called Automatic Power Shift allows substantial savings from June through September, in exchange for allowing SCE to remotely "cycle-off" selected air-conditioning units during periods of heavy use and potential power outages.



Electrical rates in the Coachella Valley continue to be among the highest in the nation. Regional electric utilities monopolies have traditionally been sole purveyors in distinct geographical areas and as such, have the ability to set prices without concern for competition. However, the regulation of electrical power is dramatically being changed by state and federal governments. Recent rulings by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission require all utilities, including investor-owned companies like SCE, to open their transmission lines to competitors and to share information about available transmission capacity. Customers may no longer be bound to buy power from the local utility company. The City may have an opportunity to play a role in reducing electricity rates for its citizens. Most transmission lines in the planning area currently are overhead; efforts should be made to underground new facilities whenever possible.

### **Natural Gas**

Natural gas service is provided in the City by Southern California Gas, which has regional and local distribution lines in the City and its Sphere-of-Influence. It is used for space heating, domestic and commercial hot water, cooking and air-conditioning applications. On average, the typical energy consuming household in our region uses approximately 6,600 cubic feet of natural gas each month. Services are available to all prospective users and nearby major transmission facilities assure availability for most anticipated needs, be they residential, commercial or industrial. Cost of services varies seasonally and with amount of use.

### **Telephone Service**

General Telephone and Electronics (GTE) provide local business and residential phone services to the area, which has lines and switching facilities in the City. GTE provides a variety of basic and special services and features, including three types of residential service. Flat rate service allows unlimited

local calls at one price. Measured service lowers the monthly rate but incremental charges for local calls. GTE's Lifeline Service is also available within certain age and income restrictions.

### **Cable Television**

Cable television service is provided to the City by Desert Hot Springs Cablevision as secured by a franchise agreement. Desert Hot Springs Cablevision provides approximately 71 channels with current capacity for 78. Fiber optic lines, the future highway for such technologies as video digital compression and data transmission services, were activated in the Fall of 1994. This allows the cable TV company to offer additional services such as telephone communications.

The current (2000) franchise agreement provides the City with up to three public access channels for information, education and public service uses, with one channel currently in use. Desert Hot Springs Cablevision also owns and operates broadcast production equipment, which it uses to provide videotaping and broadcasting as a public service for community-sponsored events and City Council meetings.

### **Solid Waste Disposal Services**

The City contracts with Desert Valley Disposal, Inc. (DVD) for provision of solid waste management and disposal services. A variety of residential and commercial services are available, including basic once-weekly residential pick up and commercial pick up available up to 6 days per week.

DVD also offers other services to such large waste generators as restaurants, retailers, and hotels and resorts.

DVD also provides a resource recovery/recycling service to the community. This includes provision of crates or other containers for the separation of cans, glass and newsprint by residents for once a week



curbside pickup. Recycling has many benefits, including preservation of landfill space for non-recyclable materials, and the preservation of energy and finite feedstock materials. An estimated 1.5 to 2.5 tons of recyclable materials are collected each month in the Desert Hot Springs area by Desert Valley Disposal.

This program is run in conformance with State of California Assembly Bill 939, which requires that every city and county implement programs to recycle, reduce at the source and compost 25% of its solid waste by the year 1995, and 50% by the year 2000.

Solid waste collected in Desert Hot Springs is currently disposed of at the Edom Hill Landfill, located east of Varner Road on Edom Hill Road. The landfill accepts waste from communities in the Coachella Valley and is operated by Riverside County. In March 2000, the remaining capacity of the landfill was estimated at 1,900,097 tons, and the projected closure date was the year 2004. With the impending closure of the Edom Hill Landfill, the City and other Coachella Valley communities are evaluating a number of disposal site alternatives. Options being considered include the development of a solid waste transfer facility in the vicinity of Interstate 10, between the cities of Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs. The facility would function as a 24-hour holding site for solid waste collected in the Coachella Valley, which would then be hauled by truck to a landfill. Landfills currently being considered include the approved, but not yet constructed Eagle Mountain Landfill east of the Coachella Valley, and the Badlands, El Sobrante and Lamb Canyon Landfills in western Riverside County.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Water, sewer and public utilities are essential parts of community development of all types. The orderly and contiguous extension of services and facilities is integral to the logical and cost-effective extension of the urban land use pattern. The economic provision of

water, energy and other public services is coordinated by the City and must be planned to adequately accommodate future growth anticipated in the General Plan. The General Plan provides service providers with important information on future service demands to allow the providers to determine how they can best be met.

In 1996, Congress passed a sweeping new Telecommunications Act rewriting sixty years of telecommunication laws. It significantly deregulated the telecommunications industry. As a result, the historical distinctions among telephone, cable and computer are beginning to disappear. Traditionally, GTE and computer communication utilized twisted copper wires. More recently, fiber optic cabling is being used by GTE as well as Desert Hot Springs Cablevision. It is cheaper, smaller, and has a greater capacity to carry large amounts of high-quality of video, data and sound. The City has a responsibility to monitor this new technology, regulate the rush anticipated of multiple providers, and plan for its installation and the needs of City residents.

## **WATER, SEWER AND UTILITIES GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL 1**

Economical water, sewer and utility facilities and services, which safely and adequately meet the needs of the City at build out.

### **GOAL 2**

A city-wide sewage collection and treatment system.

### **Policy 1**

Monitor resource management activities of the MSWD, CVWD and Regional Water Quality Control Board to preserve and protect water resources.



## **Policy 2**

The City shall support the formation of neighborhood-wide Assessment Districts for the purpose of sewer installation.

### **Program 2 A**

The City shall cooperate with MSWD in their efforts to establish and prepare the preliminary engineering estimates for assessment districts for sewer installation.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department

**Schedule:** As necessary

## **Policy 3**

All new subdivisions of ten lots or more shall extend and be connected to sewer lines.

## **Policy 4**

Should a sewer line exist in the right-of-way to serve a lot and a lateral line is the only connection required, sewer connection shall be required at the time the lot is developed.

## **Policy 5**

Where a sewer line exists in the right-of-way to serve a residential unit but the unit is served by a septic system, at the point of sale every effort shall be made to have the septic system properly abandoned and the unit connected to the sewer system.

### **Program 5 A**

The MSWD shall provide the City with a list of residences and businesses not connected to the sewer system.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department; Community Development Department; Mission Springs Water District

**Schedule:** 2001-02

### **Program 5 B**

The City shall assist the MSWD in the development of a financial assistance program for sewer installation in existing neighborhoods.

**Responsible Agency:** MSWD; Redevelopment Agency; Economic Development Office

**Schedule:** 2002-03

## **Policy 6**

If soil conditions do not permit proper percolation, septic systems will be prohibited.

## **Policy 7**

The City shall coordinate with Mission Springs Water District in monitoring County regulation of septic tank pumping within the City and its Sphere-of-Influence.

## **Policy 8**

The City should take a proactive role in forming a cooperative program with adjacent cities to reduce the costs of electric service.

### **Program 8 A**

The City shall investigate possible methods by which the cost of electric power is controlled or lowered, including but not limited to entering into joint power purchase agreements with adjoining cities.

**Responsible Agency:** Administration Department; City Council; Public Works Department; adjoining cities

**Schedule:** 2001-02

## **Policy 9**

Utility lines on major streets and scenic roadway shall have primary consideration for under-grounding.

## **Policy 10**

Major utility facilities shall be sited to assure minimal impacts to the environment and the community, and minimize potential environmental hazards.

## **Policy 11**

The City shall encourage the coordinated and shared use of underground transmission corridors as a means of minimizing repeated excavations into the streets.

## **Policy 12**

The City shall proactively participate in the regional disposal of solid waste and the reduction of the waste stream to landfills.



**Program 12 A**

Work closely with the solid waste hauling franchisee to ensure that all possible recycling techniques are implemented within the City.

**Responsible Agency:** Public Works Department

**Schedule:** 2000

**Program 12 B**

Participate in the siting of transfer stations which serve the region, and ensure that such stations do not negatively impact the City's economic growth.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department, City Manager

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous



# FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION ELEMENT

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this element is to address two of the essential functions of government, which are to assure the provision of police and fire protection services. The Element reflects the City's commitment which places high priority on the best protection services possible. Fire services are state-of-the-art, with one station in Desert Hot Springs and another station planned for the Rancho Royale area, at such time that the Fire Department determines the Station No. 37 can no longer adequately serve the area. Contractual arrangements are also in place for police services, to enhance service in the most cost-effective manner possible.

## BACKGROUND

Government Code Section 65302(g) requires that a General Plan include a Safety Element, or its equivalent, for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risk associated with the effects of fire, crime or other threats. Public Resources Code Section 4125(a) also references the State Board of Forestry, which classifies lands for the purpose of establishing hazards and responsibility. Unclassified lands will fall under the jurisdiction of the City or appropriate federal agency, such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service.

### Fire Protection Services

The threat of fire poses hazards to life and property. Given the City's generally sparsely vegetated open desert lands and hillsides, developed areas are the source of most service calls. Fire protection is provided to the City by the Riverside County Fire Department under contract with the



California Department of Forestry. Paramedic personnel and ambulance service is provided by American Medical Response (AMR), which is dispatched to the scene by the fire station. (Also see the Health Service Element).

The Riverside County Fire Department operates thirteen fire stations in the upper Coachella Valley. The following fire stations are well situated to provide fire protection services to the City and its Sphere-of-Influence, and include one station located within the city limits. Each of the stations is staffed by a minimum of one company officer and one fire fighter at any given time. The Fire Department maintains mutual aid agreements with fire stations in Morongo Valley, Palm Springs and Cathedral City.

*Desert Hot Springs Station, No. 37* is located at 65958 Pierson Boulevard, next to the City Hall building. This station is equipped with two 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm) Type-1 fire engines, one squad, and one rescue vehicle. The station has seven active volunteers, with two more in training.

*North Palm Springs Station, No. 36* is located on Dillon Road just west of Indian Avenue in North Palm Springs. This station is equipped with two Type-1 fire engines and one squad, and currently has twenty volunteers.

*Sky Valley Station, No. 56* is located on Dillon Road, approximately three miles east of Desert Hot Springs. The station has one Type-1 fire engine, but has no volunteers at this time.

National Fire Insurance Organizations and the National Fire Protection Association formally recommend, respectively, a maximum three mile and five minute response parameter for siting fire stations. Response times within the City range from zero to nine minutes. The highest response times occur in the eastern portion of the City, in the vicinity of Hacienda Avenue and Mountain View Road. The City and Fire Department have identified the need for a new fire station in this area. It is anticipated that the new station will be constructed in several years.



Continued growth may stimulate the need for additional fire stations. The adopted Rancho Royale Specific Plan, located in the northwestern portion of the City, is conditioned to construct a new fire station during its first phase of development. The station will be located west of Highway 62 and north of Pierson Boulevard. Although no definite site is called for, the Olympus Specific Plan, located mid-way between existing City development and Highway 62, also includes the possible siting of a fire station. Further consultation and coordination with local fire officials will be required to determine the optimum location for additional future facilities.

### **Police Protection Services**

The City of Desert Hot Springs Police Department operates out of City Hall. In March 2000, Police Department staff included 16 officers, although the City is budgeted for a total of 22 officers. The Department is equipped with 22 police vehicles, including unmarked cars, and maintains mutual aid agreements with the California Highway Patrol and Riverside County Sheriff's Department. The Department strives to maintain a ratio of approximately 1.2 officers per 1,000 population.

Police response times can vary significantly, depending on the location of patrol cars at the time of a call. In 2000, average response time to a code 3 (extreme emergency) was 2.5 minutes, and average response time to a code 1 (non-emergency) was 8 minutes. All calls are prioritized, and response time is contingent on the number of calls pending and their urgency. Methods to reduce or prevent crime include adequate street and security lighting, and the integration of "defensible space" design concepts. Defensible space permits surveillance and provides the highest possible level of security, use of appropriate security hardware, and building siting and visibility.

The Police Department promotes and participates in a variety of community programs, including Neighborhood Watch and a holiday program which provides meals and gifts to families in need. The Department sponsors Green Ribbon Month during the

month of May, and gives presentations on child safety to elementary and middle school students. The Police League also sponsors various youth programs.

To understand the issue of crime it is imperative to consider geographic, demographic, economic and other factors specific to a jurisdiction. The transience of the population, its composition by age and gender, education levels, and prevalent family conditions with respect to the family unit is correlated to crime statistics. Considering a jurisdiction's industrial/economic base, economic conditions relating to median income, poverty level, job availability, dependence on neighboring jurisdictions, and transportation systems are all key factors in assessing and understanding the crime issue.

The strength and effectiveness of law enforcement in a city should also be considered when comparing crime statistics. One city may report more crime than another, not because there is more crime, but rather because its law enforcement, through proactive efforts, identifies more offenses. A high ratio of officers-to-population allows identification and reporting of crimes more effectively. Attitudes of the citizens toward crime influences their crime reporting practices, especially concerning more minor offenses. This will have an impact on the volume of crimes reported to police.

The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which would result from continued development, cannot be estimated with confidence and will vary from community to community. It can be expected that as development continues so will the need for expanded police protection services and personnel.

### **Citizens on Patrol**

The Citizens on Patrol (COP) program is a group of volunteers 18 years and over who voluntarily patrol the City. The program currently has approximately 25 trained volunteers. COP volunteers receive training by the Police Department and operate City vehicles. COP provides assistance to the Police Department including routine patrols, vacation home checks, traffic control and community-sponsored event support. The City provides shirts, jackets and patches for the volunteers.



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The distribution of land uses and anticipated development pattern will continue to directly impact the City's ability to provide adequate fire and police protection. The availability of staff and equipment and the need to provide protection services within a minimum time frame affects the responsiveness of the City's police and fire departments. Development in the City that is distant from services may risk longer response times, which must be considered in land use planning, circulation/traffic planning, the provision of fire flows, and in emergency preparedness planning. The timing of specific law enforcement will result from continued development. Fire protection needs are established by and are highly dependant upon the location, type and intensity of future development.

## **FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

A high level of police and fire protection and service.

#### **Policy 1**

All new and improved developments shall be reviewed for their impact on safety and the provision of police and fire protection services.

#### **Program 1 A**

Consult and coordinate with the Riverside County Fire Department to establish potential fire station locations to provide for future adequate levels of service.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Riverside County Fire Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

Enforce fire standards and regulations in the course of reviewing building plans and conducting building inspections.

#### **Program 2 A**

Coordinate with the Mission Springs Water District to assure adequate water supply and pressure for all existing and proposed developments.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Mission Springs Water District.

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

Potentially hazardous material use and storage shall be regulated by the City and other appropriate agencies.

#### **Program 3 A**

The siting of facilities which involve the storage of hazardous, flammable or explosive materials shall be conducted in such a manner as to assure the highest level of safety in strict conformance with the Uniform Fire Code and other applicable codes and regulations.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Building Department; Riverside County Fire Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 4**

Due to the fire hazard potential of hilly areas with slopes of 10 percent or greater, access problems, lack of water or sufficient pressure, and excessively dry brush, special on-site fire protection measures shall be specified during project review.

#### **Policy 5**

Emergency police, fire and paramedic vehicle access shall be provided with all new development to the satisfaction of the City.

#### **Policy 6**

Utilize crime prevention principles through the integration of project planning which results in "defensible space" or high security designs as a means of providing increased security in residential, commercial and industrial development.

#### **Policy 7**

The City shall assist the Sheriff's Department in promoting the Neighborhood COP Program.



**Policy 8**

The City shall support the Citizens on Patrol program.

**Policy 9**

As corporate limits are expanded, every effort shall be made to assure the same or greater level of police and fire protection as currently provided to City residents.



# SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

This Element describes school and library facilities in the City, sphere-of-influence and surrounding area. It also provides guidance and direction for decision makers to ensure support and convenient access to these essential services. City residents of all ages deserve the opportunity to gain a basic education and to continue to expand their personal and professional horizons through these important educational and cultural resources. The convenient and safe accessibility of the City's school and library facilities depend upon the community's land use pattern, and the efficiency and safety of its streets, and the availability of bicycle lanes/paths and public transit.

## BACKGROUND

With continued residential development, a larger permanent population, and the increased number of families with school-age children, pressures on the local school district have steadily grown. All of the City and SOI is located within the boundaries of the Palm Springs Unified School District. The Palm Springs Unified School District is required by law to provide school facilities to accommodate students.

California Government Code Section 65302(a) requires that, among other things, the General Plan assess the general distribution and location of educational facilities, and determine the adequacy of these facilities.

### Palm Springs Unified School District

The school district has declared that their facilities are overcrowded. In addition to permanent classroom facilities, the District uses portable classroom buildings on most campuses.

## School Descriptions

The Palm Springs Unified School District currently (2000) operates four elementary schools, one middle school, one continuation high school, and one high school within the City and its sphere. This Element includes a brief discussion of these schools, which are considered to primarily serve residents of Desert Hot Springs. The District currently has no plans to construct new schools in the planning area.

### Edward L. Wenzloff Elementary

The Edward L. Wenzloff Elementary School, located on West Drive, opened at its current site in 1975 and serves the levels of kindergarten through fifth grade. The school's total capacity is 716 students, and school year 1999-2000 enrollment was 637 students.

### Julius Corsini Elementary

The Julius Corsini Elementary School first opened in 1982, is located on Hacienda Drive, and serves the levels of kindergarten through fifth grade. The school can accommodate a total of 756 students. Enrollment for the 1999-2000 school year was 732 students.

### Bubbling Wells Elementary

Opened in 1993, the Bubbling Wells Elementary School accommodates kindergarten through fifth grades and is located on Camino Campanero. During the 1999-2000 school year, 620 students were enrolled in Bubbling Wells Elementary, although the school can accommodate a total of 661 students.

### Two Bunch Palms Elementary

The Two Bunch Palms Elementary School opened in 1998, and is located at West Drive and Two Bunch Palms Trail. Two Bunch Palms Elementary can accommodate a total of 716 students from kindergarten through the fifth grades. Enrollment for the year 1999-2000 was 663 students.



### **Desert Springs Middle School**

Opened in 1989, the Desert Springs Middle School is located on Two Bunch Palms Trail. The school serves the sixth through the eighth grades. School year 1999-2000 enrollment totalled 1,101 students, although the school can accommodate a total of 1,191 students.

### **Las Brisas Continuation School**

Las Brisas Continuation School is a satellite of Mt. San Jacinto Continuation High School in Cathedral City and is located on Palm Drive. It provides alternative education for students in ninth through twelfth grades, with a 1999-2000 enrollment of 18. The school can accommodate a total of 20 students.

### **Desert Hot Springs High School**

Desert Hot Springs High School opened in September 1999 and is located on Pierson Boulevard. The school has a total capacity of 1,161 students, and its 1999-2000 school year enrollment was 679.

When the State of California reduced funding for public schools, it passed legislation effective January 1, 1987 to permit school districts to levy a per square-foot fee for new residential, commercial and industrial development. These fees must be paid by developers directly to the school district prior to the issuance of building permits. The fees are used to assist in the construction or reconstruction of school facilities. In the year 2000, the residential school fee was \$1.93 per square foot and the commercial and industrial per square-foot fee was \$0.31.

### **Private Schools**

Three private schools also serve the City. The following descriptions and student enrollments are for the 1999-2000 school year.

- The Palm Springs Christian School is located on Little Morongo Road, and provides classroom instruction for Kindergarten through Grade 12. The school can accommodate a total of 50 students, and 1999-2000 enrollment was 35 students.
- Community Children's Center is located at Acoma and Mesquite Avenue. The school provides preschool education and day care

for ages 3.5 to 6 years, and elementary education for kindergarten through Grade 6. It also offers before and after school care for children ages 6 to 11. Current student enrollment is 85 students. The school can accommodate a total of 95 students, and will expand to accommodate 125 students by the year 2001.

- Storyland Preschool is located on West Drive, and provides preschool education and day care for children ages 2 to 6. The school also provides before and after school care for children ages 6 to 11. Current enrollment is 58, but the school can accommodate a total of 67 students.

In the future, should the state institute a Voucher Program, a redistribution of students between public and private schools may result.

### **Libraries**

Currently (2000), the Desert Hot Spring's library is a branch of the joint library system of the County of Riverside. The library is housed in a county-owned building, which comprises approximately 3,500 square feet. In December 1999, the library contained approximately 29,278 volumes. Special resources include books and tapes for both adults and children, with computer terminals and text-base access to the Internet. Library services include a delivery system, which provides for the exchange of books and other resources between all County libraries on a daily basis. A bookmobile, which is operated in conjunction with Sunline Transit Agency and contains approximately 10,000 volumes, provides mobile library services to residents within the unincorporated areas of the planning area and the Coachella Valley.

The County strives to maintain an unadopted standard of 2 volumes and 0.5 square feet of library space per resident. As part of its mitigation fee review process, the County will soon present to its Board of Supervisors a plan to provide a library facility of at least 10,000 square feet in the City of Desert Hot Springs. The proposal could result in the construction of a new library, or an expansion of the existing building in the next five to ten years.



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City's schools and library are important community assets that support City children and adults, and are an important barometer of the social health of the city and its quality of life. These assets are also an important criteria for many considering residing in the City. Schools and libraries are land use-sensitive, and their location requires consideration of many areas, including student safety, accessibility, impacts from noise and other factors.

Public school districts are "responsible agencies" and have "lead agency" status for the siting, planning and processing of development approvals. While consultation with local jurisdictions is required, most decisions rest with the school district, with building planning and design processed and approved by the State Architect's Office. Nonetheless, the City can assist and coordinate with the local school districts and state agencies in the planning and provision of educational facilities to maximize opportunities for the education of residents of the community.

The General Plan provides policies and programs to preserve and protect existing and future school and library sites from excessive noise and traffic conditions, and help ensure accessibility and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

## **SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT GOALS, POLICIES AND, PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Educational and library facilities in the City of Desert Hot Springs providing quality services and facilities, and convenient access to these important educational and cultural resources.

#### **Policy 1**

The City shall cooperate and coordinate with the Palm Springs Unified School District to identify sites needed to meet future District growth demands. The City shall encourage that potential school sites are planned within centrally located areas of residential development.

#### **Program 1 A**

Provide enhanced educational opportunities for the residents of the community, as part of the City's continuing effort to cooperate and coordinate with the Palm Springs Unified School District in planning for new facilities.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Palm Springs Unified School District

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

The Desert Museum staff shall be encouraged to cooperate and coordinate with the Palm Springs Unified School District to use museum programs to enhance the educational experience of District students.

#### **Program 2 A**

As part of a continuing effort to provide enhanced educational opportunities for the residents of the community, the City shall encourage on-going cooperation and coordination between the District and the Desert Museum to make museum resources available to District classes to the greatest degree practical.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Palm Springs Unified School District; Desert Museum

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall review Palm Springs Unified School District development proposals and environmental documentation, and shall otherwise coordinate and cooperate and work with the District to encourage the provision of safe, secure, and permanent educational space for all students.

#### **Program 3 A**

Preserve and protect existing and future school and library sites from excessive noise and traffic conditions by encouraging the use of design and development solutions that mitigate these impacts.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Palm Springs Unified School District

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.



#### **Policy 4**

Recognizing the importance of the library system for educational and cultural development within the community, the City shall make every effort to assure that quality library facilities and resources are accessible to all residents.

#### **Program 4 A**

The City shall coordinate efforts to expand and enhance library facilities, including library space, more books, expanded electronic and Internet facilities; increased staffing and operation hours; and outreach and education programs.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; County of Riverside; Palm Springs Unified School District; other library systems

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

#### **Policy 5**

Support the expansion of educational opportunities for the City's residents at all levels.

#### **Program 5 A**

Work with community college and university districts to encourage the development of extension courses and/or satellite college facilities within the City.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager

**Schedule:** 2001, On-going



## HEALTH SERVICES ELEMENT

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### PURPOSE

The Health Services Element addresses the need for accessible health care services and facilities for all residents of the community, as well as ensuring that planned emergency routes between health-related facilities such as hospitals, clinics, and convalescent homes are in place for the growing Desert Hot Springs population. The Element also provides goals, policies and programs that define and direct the City's role in assuring the provision of a variety of medical care facilities to serve its diverse population. This Element of the General Plan has traditionally received little attention in spite of its importance in enhancing the health and welfare of the community's residents. There has been a recent growth in awareness of the need for community planning of health care services.

It is the intention of this Element to address principal concerns that arise during review of development proposals, including proximity of health care services to all residents, especially those who reside in senior or convalescent housing. The City has a particular interest in the provision of accessible medical facilities, convalescent facilities and their services, as well as facilities specializing in medical emergencies. Such related facilities also include: Home Health Care, for those patients allowed to remain at home but requiring assessment and treatment by a skilled nurse or therapist; Continuing Care Centers, offering sub-acute (long-term) care or special intensive medical care for seriously ill residents; and Hospice services, home services for the terminally ill and their families.

### BACKGROUND

This Element is related to and shall be coordinated with other Elements of the General Plan, including the Circulation, Emergency Preparedness, and Fire and Police Protection Elements. Seniors over aged 65 make up over 14% of the City of Desert Hot Springs' population. The County of Riverside Health Department, the State of California, and the

Hospital Planning Association of Southern California are among the agencies that analyze all types of hospital data and statistics on an area-wide basis to help measure the present and future needs of such facilities and the populations they serve. The other key duties of health departments are: developing standards of service, organizing review proposals for new facilities, and informing public health practitioners of new standards. As the health planning field gains greater recognition, health departments will continue to forecast needs for integrated services and facilities, and analyze new trends in medical and health facilities planning.

#### Special Services/ Mobile Health Services

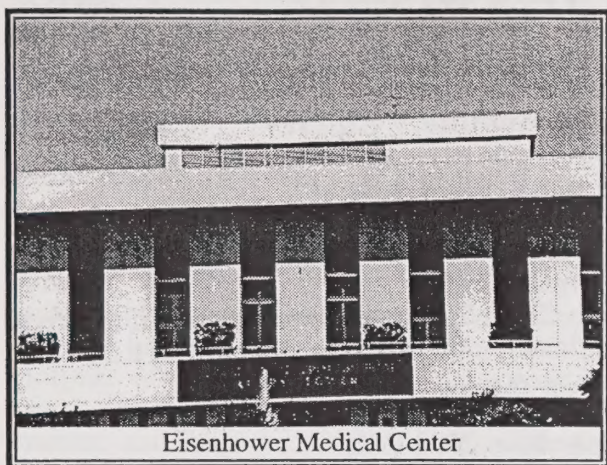
Special mobile health services are periodically offered at the Senior Center located at the Carl May Community Center on West Drive, through the Riverside County Public Health Department. Primary care clinics are offered by participating physicians and include physical examinations, diagnostic screenings, lab tests, immunizations, and health seminars.

#### Desert Hospital

Desert Hospital, located approximately six miles south of the City and within the city limits of Palm Springs, is a licensed 305 acute bed hospital which functions as a notable intensive care facility between Riverside County and the Arizona border. The Hospital has entered into a long-term management agreement with Tenant Health Care, an owner and operator of more than 140 acute care hospitals with headquarters in of Santa Barbara, California. Desert Hospital has a twenty-four hour emergency room and a level II Trauma Care facility with a staff of specially trained trauma surgeons to offer their aid in the event of a major injury. Desert Hospital also has a Home Health Care department which provides in-home nursing and household maintenance service. Hospice of the Desert has been incorporated into the Desert Hospital operations to provide specialized counseling for the terminally ill.



## Eisenhower Medical Center



Eisenhower Medical Center, located in the City of Rancho Mirage, also is available to provide services to residents of Desert Hot Springs. This hospital is licensed for 261 patient beds. Twenty-four hour emergency facilities are also available, with at least one full time physician on duty at all times. Located on the same grounds are the Betty Ford Center for chemical dependency, the Annenberg Center for World Health Sciences, and the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center. The Betty Ford Center is currently undergoing an expansion, which will include a new 20-bed residential facility and a structure that will house the Children's Program, Training Services and Alumni Programs.

Eisenhower is also a provider of a wide variety of out-patient and specialist services, and has recently opened a birthing center that could offer service to residents of the Desert Hot Springs Community. The Andrew Allen Surgical Pavilion is currently (2000) under construction and will consist of a 40,000 square foot state-of-the-art medical surgical facility with ten operating rooms. The facility is expected to open in Fall 2000.

### **Desert Rehab Services, Inc. (DRS)**

Two drug and alcohol treatment facilities owned and operated by Desert Rehab Services, Inc., and one treatment facility operated by the Soroptimists are located in the area. DRS is licensed and certified by the California Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to operate The Ranch facility and Hacienda Valdez.

The Ranch is a 46-bed all male facility which provides 5 to 7 day detoxification programs, as well as a variety of primary services programs ranging from individual counseling to recreational and social activities. The Ranch also provides extended care and treatment programs for clients referred from other facilities, as well as a 6-month transitional housing program. The Ranch (previously Lost Heads Ranch) is located at the end of Annandale Avenue just north of the City limits.

Hacienda Valdez is located within the City limits and provides 6-month transitional housing services, a 5 to 7 day detoxification program, and support counseling for women. Hacienda Valdez is a 35-bed facility for women who have already completed a primary treatment program and provides a structured and supported residential environment to help clients back into the mainstream.

The House of Hope is located on Cielo Azul Way and is a 5 bed short-term (90 day) female facility for drug and alcohol rehabilitation. The House of Hope also provides parenting and other workshops, individual counseling, monthly community services, and social activities. Residents also attend most of the Soroptimist meetings and community functions.

### **Inland Empire Community Health Center (IECHC)**

The Inland Empire Community Health Center has offices on Mountain View Road within the City limits. This private non-profit corporation is based in San Bernardino and provides general practitioners, Ob/Gyns and pediatricians. The IECHC provides affordable, professional medical services and has established strategic alliances with Desert Hospital and other for the provision of special services. Fees are based on a sliding scale, which also extends to pharmaceuticals. The IECHC is also a Child Health and Disability Prevention Program provider. These offices typically see between 30 and 40 visitors each day.

### **Emergency Services**

The City of Desert Hot Springs is served by two major emergency response organizations: the Riverside County Fire Department and the City Police Department. Desert Hospital is



located six miles south of the current (2000) City limits, providing general med-surgical, acute care and trauma center services. Advanced life support (ALS) ambulances and crews are posted at the Pierson Boulevard fire station and also patrol the City and Sphere area. Ambulance services are provided by American Medical Response (AMR), which has a service area encompassing the entire Coachella Valley. AMR typically has ten ALS ambulances in the field, each with a crew of two paramedics; AMR currently maintains between 14 and 16 units in its Desert Cities district (Please see the Emergency Preparedness Element).

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The City currently has an urgent care type facility located on Palm Drive, which is staffed by a Physician's Assistant, supported by an adjoining physician. With the growing local population, the community's continued physical isolation from other medical providers, and a basically health-conscience community, the City should have additional health and medical facilities. Many of the local spa hotels and message specialists provide holistic health regimes that have given the City its name and character. The community should build on this foundation and attempt to attract more conventional and emerging medical/healthcare offices, clinics and treatment facilities. The physically and psychologically healing effects of the hot mineral waters should also be exploited.

## **HEALTH SERVICES GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

High quality health care facilities and services that are easily accessible to City residents and promote good health and well being.

#### **Policy 1**

Consult and coordinate with Desert Hospital, Eisenhower and other professional providers to bring quality health care facilities and services that are accessible within the City of Desert Hot Springs.

#### **Program 1 A**

The City, shall consult with local providers to plan and develop facilities and provide services on an on-going basis, and which meet the health care needs of the City residents.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Council; Desert Hospital; Eisenhower

**Schedule:** Continuous.

#### **Program 1 B**

The City's Economic Development efforts shall include the proactive recruitment of a 24 hour emergency medical treatment facility.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager

**Schedule:** 2001-2002

#### **Policy 2**

Cooperate in the continued development of medical and health care facilities in accordance with the changing demographics of the community.

#### **Program 2 A**

As the City's population continues to grow, the City shall coordinate with transportation service providers and the local healthcare providers to maintain accessibility to health care facilities and services so that residents in general and seniors in particular, will be served quickly and efficiently.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Desert Hospital; Eisenhower Medical center

**Schedule:** Immediate, Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

The City shall participate in the promotion of Desert Hot Springs as a health-conscious spa resort community providing a wide range of mainstream and alternative therapies and treatments.

#### **Program 3 A**

The City shall work with local health professionals from all segments of the profession, as well as the hoteliers and Chamber of Commerce in refining the City's health industry image and promoting it to healthcare professionals and general public.

**Responsible Agency:** Community development Department, DHS Hotelier's Association, Healthcare Professionals; Chamber of Commerce

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ELEMENT

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## PURPOSE

The Emergency Preparedness Element identifies critical facilities necessary in the event of an emergency, to assess the availability of emergency response services, and to discuss the potential impacts of significant man-made and natural hazards within the community. The purpose of the Element is to address concerns regarding the City's capability to respond to a natural and man-made disaster. The Element sets forth the goal, policies and programs, that have been, or will be developed by the City to assure an effective response to the various environmental and man-made hazards that the community faces.

## BACKGROUND

The Emergency Preparedness Element is of particular relevance and importance to the City and its residents and property owners. This element is directly related to the Geotechnical, Flooding and Hydrology, and Hazardous and Toxic Waste Elements. The Fire and Police Protection Element also has a direct relationship to the Emergency Preparedness Element, assuring protection against structural and wild fires, and the maintenance of law and order during and following emergencies. Another Element with an essential relationship of Land Use and location-specific threats. The Circulation Element, which defines the availability of and need for high-capacity roadways providing secure evacuation routes or access to the City in the event of an emergency.

The City of Desert Hot Springs and the Coachella Valley are subject to significant environmental and man-made hazards, which constitute significant threats to life and property. The City's substantial potential for major earthquakes, and flooding, are natural occurrences which cannot be prevented. Man-made threats include but are not limited to wildland and urban fires, hazardous material spills and leaks, and major transportation accidents, including automobiles, trucks and aircraft.

The Emergency Services Act was enacted in 1970 by the California Legislature to recognize the State's responsibility in mitigating the effects of natural, man-made or war-caused emergencies (Government Code Section 8550). Among other things, this Act requires local governments and utilities, to abide by the requirements of the Office of Emergency Services.

This Element is also recommended as an integral part of the a broader environmental hazards discussion within the General Plan. Government Code Section 65302(g) states that the Plan shall address "the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure...; slope instability leading to mud slides or landslides".

In order to put into effect the requirements of the law, the City, other jurisdictions throughout Riverside County and the County itself have prepared a series of integrated and coordinated plans, including the Desert Hot Springs Multi-Hazard Functional Plan (MHFP, 1996). The Plan addresses pre-emergency planning, normal and heightened readiness levels, emergency operations and post-emergency recovery. Interagency planning and coordination is also an integral part of the Plan.

## Critical Facilities

Certain critical facilities will become essential parts of the response plan, in the event that the emergency preparedness plan must be put into effect. Facilities that house emergency services such as hospitals, fire stations, police and emergency services facilities, governmental operations and utility facilities. Critical facilities also include communication networks supporting police, fire and emergency personnel, as well as commercial radio stations that can play an essential role in apprising the community of appropriate actions to take.



Emergency evacuation and access routes, peak load water supply and delivery systems, and secure airport operations are also other critical facilities in the event of a major disaster. Evacuation routes play an especially critical role in that they allow the evacuation and/or the delivery of ground-based assistance access to the City. The difficulties with these facilities must be anticipated to maximize the effectiveness of an emergency response plan.

Region-wide damage and injuries caused by the recent (1992) Landers and Big Bear Earthquakes (please see Geotechnical Element) emphasized the need for an adequate emergency shelter for those who cannot return to their homes. Currently (2000), the City does not have this type of facility, although the soon to be constructed high school may serve in this regard. Additional planning and discussion is needed to assure an adequate level of emergency and basic service for Desert Hot Springs' growing population.

#### **Emergency Transportation and Circulation**

The deliverer of emergency personnel and supplies is one of the single most important activities after a major disaster. Access to the community is restricted by natural and man-made barriers, and each major ground route in the area is subject to significant damage from natural forces, including earthquakes and flooding. Access to the City from the other incorporated communities in the Coachella Valley could also be affected in the event U.S. Interstate-10 overpasses were damaged along its length.

As discussed in the Hydrology Element, the City has occasionally become cut off and isolated from the neighboring communities by major stormwater runoff. The lack of adequate flood control facilities and the their high cost of construction means that the City will require a higher degree of self-sufficiency than its neighbors. Therefore, all-weather and earthquake-resistant bridges, culverts, and road adjoining cut slopes must be given careful consideration and prioritizing.

Programs can be developed in close coordination with CalTrans and the Federal Highway Administration, Riverside County Transportation Commission, CVAG and neighboring communities, as well as Sunline Transit, to assure the maximum functional integrity of major roads and transportation systems serving the City.

The Palm Springs Regional Airport is located within fifteen minutes of the City and therefore provides an important alternative means of access to the upper Coachella Valley for both fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft. The airport is located some distance from major fault zones and is outside the 100-year flood plain of the Whitewater River, enhancing its on-going availability.

#### **Emergency Medical Facilities**

Emergency medical services are provided in the City and the Sphere by American Medical Response (AMR), which posts and patrols one of its Advance Life Support (ALS) ambulance units at the Pierson Boulevard Fire Station. A heliport is located immediately north west of the fire station. Each of the three County fire stations serving the City are staffed with personnel trained in CPR and resuscitation. Desert Hospital in Palm Springs, is a licensed 398 bed hospital and functions as the most notable intensive care facility between Riverside County and the Arizona border. This hospital has a twenty-four hour emergency room and a level II Trauma Care facility with a staff of specially trained trauma surgeons to offer their aid in the event of a major injury (also, please see the Health Services Element).

#### **Emergency Operations Center**

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located at City Hall, is the heart of the emergency response system from which all emergency operations are coordinated. The operations of the EOC are coordinated through the implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS), which is an integral part of the Desert Hot Springs Multi-Hazard Functional Plan. The Plan was adopted by the City Council in 1996.



## **Emergency Organization and Chain of Command**

As the title implies, emergency preparedness is the extensive and comprehensive pre-planning necessary to assure a timely, well coordinated, efficient and effective response to emergencies affecting the community. It requires a well thought out working relationship between numerous City, County, State and Federal departments and agencies, which normally work largely independently. Inter-governmental special purpose units may be established that are detached from their normal day-to-day responsibilities. A command hierarchy is established with clear lines of authority and communication. The City Manager serves as the Director of Emergency Services in Desert Hot Springs, followed by the Director of Community Safety, and then the Public Works Director. The Fire Chief or Senior law enforcement officer are then the next available City employee with the highest degree of expertise following in the command hierarchy.

### **Extended Organizational Structure & Assistance**

There are a number of other agencies and capabilities brought to bear in an emergency. These are made available through mutual aid agreements, which allow the City to expand otherwise over-extended capabilities and staff, and to draw upon the resources of those other agencies. In general, assisting entities may include other local cities and school districts, the County of Riverside, State of California, federal and even international agencies.

The Red Cross may be called upon to open and operate shelters for victims of an emergency, as well as to provide first aid, damage assessment, help with communications and the provision of various other resources. This agency typically initiates its own emergency response, but close coordination through the Emergency Operations Center is strongly encouraged. Military aid is typically in the form of the National Guard, whose role is to assist rather than substitute for the City's response efforts. Requests for assistance of the Guard are to be channeled through the County Office of Emergency Services.

Financial assistance to the City and victims of a disaster can come from several sources, with the State and Federal governments being the most important. In order to qualify for this assistance, the City must declare a local emergency within 10 days of the actual occurrence of the disaster, have damages assessed, and must apply for aid within 60 days of declaring the local emergency (Government Code Sections 8680- 8692).

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The Emergency Preparedness Element is implemented through the City Multi-Hazard Functional Plan, which includes detailed organizational directives, scopes of responsibility, operational priorities, authority and powers, emergency communication protocols and other components of the framework needed for effective response in the event of an emergency. The ability of the community to respond to emergencies will also be affected by the expansion of land uses and the location of future fire stations and other public safety facilities. Enhanced emergency medical capabilities will be included in this expansion of services.

Development standards, as set forth in the City Zoning Ordinance, will also influence how effectively emergency personnel can respond to events affecting occupied structures. The degree to which recommendations and policies and programs found in the Geotechnical, Flooding and Hydrology, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials Elements are implemented, will also impact emergency preparedness. Finally, establishing and maintaining contacts and coordination with other responsible agencies will give future direction to emergency response strategies.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GOAL, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

A thoroughly coordinated, responsive and effective emergency preparedness implementation plan in the City of Desert Hot Springs, assuring a high degree of readiness to respond to natural and man-made disasters in a manner that maximizes City, County, State and Federal response capabilities.



### **Policy 1**

The City shall maintain and update the Multi-Hazard Functional Plan to keep it current with staffing and technical capabilities of the City and cooperating agencies.

#### **Program 1 A**

Periodically schedule and direct the review and revision of the Emergency Plan through responsible department heads and assure the annual review of the Plan by the City Council.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Department; City Council

**Schedule:** Annually.

### **Policy 2**

Coordinate with CalTrans and other appropriate agencies for the establishment of emergency evacuation routes and plans to preserve or reestablish the use of Palm Drive, Mission Lakes Boulevard, Pierson Boulevard, Dillon Road, Hacienda Avenue, Interstate-10 and State Highways 62 as emergency evacuation routes.

#### **Program 2 A**

Establish an on-going liaison with CalTrans, Riverside County, Palm Springs and Cathedral City to facilitate the establishment of emergency evacuation routes, and to provide for the development of an emergency response plan that assures the timely repair of major roads and highways damaged by earthquakes, flooding or other disasters.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Department; Community Development Department; CalTrans; Riv. Co.; Adjoining Cities

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Program 2 B**

Consult with CalTrans, the Federal Highway Administration and FEMA regarding funding assistance for the construction, repair and/or upgrading of bridges, floodway crossings, cut slopes and other drainage structures to minimize the potential isolation of the community and surround facilities from ground-based assistance.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community safety Department; Community Development Department; Riverside County; CalTrans; Federal Highway Administration; FEMA

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 3**

The Desert Hot Springs Multi-Hazard Functional Plan shall be coordinated and updated to assure that it is compatible with and complements the Riverside County Plan and its implementation procedures.

#### **Program 3 A**

Regularly confer with the Riverside County Fire Department, Emergency Services Division, and shall share and coordinate plans to provide mutual aid assistance in the event of a disaster requiring emergency response.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; CalTrans; Community Safety Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 4**

The City and the U.S. Geological Survey or Cal Tech shall establish on-going lines of communications to assure the provision of earthquake predictions which may impact the City and surrounding area.

#### **Program 4 A**

Establish a liaison with the appropriate office of the US Geological Survey and establish a procedure by which the USGS contacts and informs the City of earthquake predictions which may affect the City and surrounding areas.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 5**

The Geotechnical and Flooding and Hydrology Elements of the General Plan shall be regularly reviewed and updated to assure that seismic and flooding hazards are fully addressed in the Emergency Plan.



### **Program 5 A**

The City shall periodically review and update the Geotechnical and Flooding and Hydrology Elements of the General Plan with the latest information and data available on the various seismic and flooding threats facing the community, utilizing information from development studies, as well as those from state and federal agencies. This process shall assure that additional or refined measures are systematically incorporated into these Elements to protect lives and property.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Community Safety Department; City Council

**Schedule:** Annually; Continuous.

### **Policy 6**

Cooperate and coordinate with Riverside County, the Mission Springs Water District and other agencies and utilities in the preparation of public information materials to assist residents and business owners in responding to local disasters.

### **Program 6 A**

Coordinate with Riverside County, Mission Springs Water District, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas, and other agencies and utilities in the development and dissemination of information and instruction on appropriate actions in the event of a local disaster.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Departments

**Schedule:** 2001-02; Continuous.

### **Program 6 B**

Coordinate with local schools and appropriate public and quasi-public agencies to assure that a public information program is developed and broadly implemented to advise the community on how to prepare for and cope in an emergency.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Departments

**Schedule:** 2002-03; Continuous.

### **Policy 7**

Thoroughly consider and assess vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters when reviewing proposals for the siting and development of critical and essential public/quasi-public facilities.

### **Program 7 A**

Incorporate an assessment of vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters when processing or reviewing proposals to site and construct critical and essential facilities, as well as sensitive land uses, to assure the maximum possible protection from environmental and man-made hazards, including earthquakes and flooding.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Community Safety Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 8**

The City shall take every action to assure the availability of emergency power generators in essential City facilities, and shall encourage the installation of these backup facilities in other important public and private facilities.

### **Program 8 A**

The City shall assure the availability of backup emergency power generators at the Emergency Operations Center and other critical City facilities. The City shall also contact and encourage the installation of these facilities at other public and quasi-public facilities, as well as at radio and television stations serving the area.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 9**

Coordinate with and integrate both commercial and private radio operators, including ham radio operators, to establish a Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service.

### **Program 9 A**

Contact, coordinate with and integrate public and private radio operators in the establishment of a Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) system to provide coordinated functioning in the event of an emergency.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Safety Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 10**

Coordinate with the appropriate agencies and service providers to assure that emergency preparedness plans include contingencies for large-scale urban and wildland fires.



#### **Program 10 A**

Confer and coordinate with the Riverside County Fire Department and/or the California Department of Forestry to assure that emergency plans are ready to implement in the event of a major urban or wildland fire.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Safety Department; Riverside County Fire Department; California Department of Forestry  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 11**

The City Multi-Hazard Functional Plan shall include programs and strategies to maximize the availability and delivery of emergency medical services to those in need during and following a local disaster.

#### **Program 11 A**

Confer and coordinate with Desert Hospital, AMR Ambulance Service, the Riverside County Fire Department, and California Department of Forestry, and private providers to assure that a coordinated plan is in place to provide an effective response during a major local emergency.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Safety Department; County Fire Department; Department of Forestry; AMR  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Program 11 B**

Emergency shelter and emergency medical stations shall be planned for and activated by the City Manager. The need for one or more additional mobile medical service vehicles, above those provided by private paramedic services, shall be investigated.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Community Safety Department  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 12**

The Palm Springs Regional Airport shall be integrated into emergency preparedness planning in the City of Desert Hot Springs as an important possible alternative means of access into the area in the event of a local disaster.

#### **Program 12 A**

Develop contingency plans, which maximize the use of the Palm Springs Regional Airport in the event of a local disaster, and provide for a coordinated plan of response, when it becomes necessary to place the airport in an emergency response mode.

**Responsible Agency:** City Manager; Palm Springs Regional Airport ; Community Safety Department  
**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.



# **PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ELEMENT**

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Element is to provide background information on the various structures and facilities in the City operated by public and quasi-public agencies, and describes some of the long-term planning issues associated with them. It is also meant to provide sufficient information to identify important and critical facilities and to assure coordinated planning and development that keeps pace with growth in the community. The element also sets forth the goal, policies and programs, which address the long-term planning needs of the community.

Public facilities are built to accommodate present and anticipated needs, some of which (most notably utilities) play a major role in determining the location, intensity, and appropriate timing of future development. Each year, local governmental agencies planning the construction of capital facilities (including cities, counties, school districts, and special districts) must submit a list to the planning agency (Government Code Section 65401) of proposed projects they would like to implement in the City. In the case of Desert Hot Springs, the planning agency must then review the projects for conformity with the General Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

A variety of public buildings and facilities exist in the City, and associated issues have long been of concern in Desert Hot Springs. They range from City Hall, a community fire station, water wells, electric power substations, and electric/telephone/cable television transmission lines, to schools and a Community Center. Also falling under this category are roads and bridges, traffic signals and support facilities, and bus shelters. This Element is directly related to the Land Use, Circulation, and Community Design Elements. All six other Elements in the Public Services and Facilities Chapter are interrelated and associated with this Element. Most public buildings and utility sites are shown on the General Plan map.

Government Code Section 65103(c) states that the planning agency is to “annually review the Capital Improvement Program of the City or County and the local public works projects of other local agencies for their consistency with the General Plan...”. The local jurisdiction may, however, emphasize the importance of this issue by requiring an optional Public Facilities Element in the General Plan (Government Code Section 65303).

The City of Desert Hot Spring is a unique resort residential community with a wide range of public buildings and facilities utilized for the benefit of community residents and visitors. While much of the discussion focuses on buildings, lands and facilities of the City, utility buildings and substations are also given special attention with regard to their compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The location of public buildings and facilities is largely dependent upon their function in the community. This functional criterion does not preclude the need for these facilities to be logically integrated into the existing and planned land use patterns of the City. Those public buildings that serve as offices where residents and business people come to conduct business should be conveniently located and provided with safe access and adequate parking.

## **Utility Infrastructure**

Utility infrastructure, which includes electrical substations, and pumping and switching facilities, can generate noise and detract from the scenic values of an area. Decorative block walls and landscape buffers around major facilities is a method typically used to integrate utility infrastructure with the surrounding area, as is the construction of telephone and other equipment buildings in an architectural style compatible with the surrounding built environment.



## **Desert Hot Springs City Hall and Police Facility**

The Desert Hot Springs City Hall is one of the newest office facilities in the City, and was originally designed to house the City Police Department. It now include City administrative offices and houses the City's Police Department.

## **Carl May Community Center**

The Carl May Community Center houses the Council Chambers, offices of the Chamber of Commerce, and the Senior Center, and is adjacent to the City Library building. The building is located on West Drive, immediately north of the Pierson Fire Station.

## **Corporation Yard/Animal Shelter Facility**

The Corporate Yard and Animal Shelter Facility consist of three metal buildings, a large metal canopy cover for equipment vehicles, fuel dispensers and a large fenced area for storage and City equipment. The main building of the Corporation Yard includes office space, tool rooms, equipment storage and one restroom. The Animal Shelter is a block building containing two cat rooms and ten indoor/outdoor runs for dogs.

## **Fire Stations**

Geographic analysis of service area response time is the basis for the placement of fire stations and is location sensitive. The City has made a concerted effort to assure the highest level of community protection. The Riverside County Fire Department maintains thirteen fire stations in the upper Coachella Valley, one of which is located within the city limits of Desert Hot Springs. Two stations located in surrounding areas are well situated to provide fire protection services to the City and its sphere-of-influence. The facilities are maintained by the County. Paramedic services are provided by American Medical Response (AMR), a private ambulance company, which is jointly dispatched by the Fire Department. These facilities are also discussed in the Police and Fire Protection Element.

## **Schools and Libraries**

The Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) provides public education to residents of Desert Hot Springs, Rancho Mirage, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, and the northern portion of Palm Desert and unincorporated areas in the vicinity, including Thousand Palms. Vast open areas of desert and mountainous regions, which are largely uninhabited, make up the remainder of the 507 square miles of the district. The Desert Hot Springs' are served by seven public schools, including the following: Bubbling Wells Elementary on Camino Campanero, Edward Wenzloff Elementary on West Drive, Julius Corsini Elementary on Hacienda Avenue, Two Bunch Palms Elementary School located at West Drive and Two Bunch Palms Trail, Desert Springs Middle School on Two Bunch Palms Trail, Las Brisas Continuation High School on Palm Drive (a satellite of Mt. San Jacinto Continuation High School in Cathedral City), and Desert Hot Springs High School located at Cholla and Pierson Boulevard.

Three private schools exist in the City: Palm Springs Christian Schools on Little Morongo Road (35 students, K-12); Community Children's Center at Acoma and Mesquite Avenue (85 students, ages 3.5 years to grade 6); and Storyland Preschool on West Drive (58 students, ages 2 - 11 years).

Currently (2000), the Desert Hot Springs Library is a branch of the joint library system of the County of Riverside. The library is housed in a 3,500± square foot building and contained 29,278 volumes in December 1999. Library resources include a delivery system, which provides for the exchange of books and other resources between all County libraries on a daily basis. A bookmobile, which is operated in conjunction with Sunline Transit Agency and contains approximately 10,000 volumes, provides mobile library services to residents within the unincorporated areas of the planning area and the Coachella Valley.

Current unadopted County standards for the provision of libraries and facilities call for approximately 0.5 square feet of library space and 2 books per capita.



While patrons continue to rely on books and other printed materials, future concepts of the library include increasing reliance on electronic access to information resources. For further discussion of these public facilities, please see the Schools and Libraries Element.

### **U.S. Post Office**

A new U.S. Post Office facility opened in Desert Hot Springs in November 1999. The Post Office is located at 66-311 Two Bunch Palms Trail and encompasses approximately 22,000 square feet. All the basic postal services are offered, including post office boxes, voter registration, mail boxes, shipping services and postage stamp sales. The site accommodates outdoor postal vehicle storage and parking areas for customers and employees.

### **Utility Companies and their Facilities**

Mission Springs Water District (MSWD), The Gas Company, Southern California Edison (SCE), GTE California, and Desert Hot Springs Cablevision are the major utility companies serving residents of the City of Desert Hot Springs. Utility company facilities include pumping stations, electrical substations, and telephone switching stations. Mission Springs Water District's administration offices are located on the northeast corner of Second Street and Palm Drive, and their Corporation Yard is on Park Lane, east of Palm Drive.

MSWD also maintains two wastewater treatment plants: the Horton Sewer Treatment plant, located on Verbena, south of Two Bunch Palms Trail, and the Desert Crest Sewer Treatment plant, located off of Dillon Road, just east of Long Canyon Road.

Desert Hot Springs Cablevision's offices are located on First Street, on the northwest corner of First and Palm Drive. SCE maintains two substations, the Devers substation and the Coffee substation, within the City's SOI. GTE's central office and facilities for Desert Hot Springs is located on First Street, as well as several Remote Service Units (RSU's) and multiplexes that are placed throughout the City and its SOI.

### **"Critical Structures"**

Critical structures are those facilities ranging from important to essential, which are located in areas that are subject to natural hazardous occurrences, including earthquake, floods wildfires, etc. Critical structures include those facilities required to provide emergency services following an earthquake or other local emergencies, such as fires and floods. Fire and police stations, hospitals, major roadways and the Palm Springs Airport are examples of facilities needed during emergency operations. Where appropriate, the siting of these facilities should be located in areas that would experience the least seismic or hazardous activities. Building design should include allowances for the offset of building foundations resulting from surface displacements. Due to the City's high seismic damage potential occurring in Seismic Zone 4 as defined by the Uniform Building Code, special consideration should be made in the development or expansion of future "critical structures". These should include thorough engineering analysis, building siting and design, and compatibility. (Please see the Geotechnical and Emergency Preparedness Elements for more information.)

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Although public facilities are built to accommodate present and anticipated needs, some (most notably water, sewer, and electricity) play a major role in determining the location, intensity, and timing of future development. Each year, local governmental agencies (including counties, school districts, and special districts) planning the construction of capital facilities must submit a list to the planning agency (Government Code 65401) of proposed projects, which they would like implemented. For example, the considerations of access and timely response are crucial in areas such as the Rancho Royale and Olympus Golf Course projects, which are segregated from the City's core. In the case of the City, the planning agency with jurisdiction must review all future projects for conformity with the General Plan.



The development and implementation of a CIP provides the basis for annual expenditures of acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and replacement of public buildings and facilities such as streets, street lights, parks, police and fire facilities, libraries, city halls, and other public facilities and buildings.

## **PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

### **GOAL**

Compatible and aesthetic integration of public buildings and facilities providing existing and future residents with dependable and cost-effective public services and facilities.

#### **Policy 1**

Coordinate with public utilities and special districts, utilities and other quasi-public entities to assure the least intrusive and most compatible integration of related buildings and facilities into the land use pattern of the community.

#### **Program 1 A**

Pro-actively encourage utility companies to involve citizen participation in the siting of proposed facilities prior to seeking City approval for facilities which may have an impact on the surrounding community.

**Responsible Agency:** Appropriate utility companies; Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Program 1 B**

Integrate all new maintenance areas and utility substations with surrounding land uses, and regulate in order to maintain a compatible and aesthetically pleasing community through the use of appropriate buffers, architectural design and landscape, and signage.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Program 1 C**

To the extent appropriate and practical, the City shall require all utility facilities (with the exception of substations, outdoor storage areas and pumping station) to be fully enclosed in buildings, which are aesthetically compatible with the areas in which they are located.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Program 1 D**

The City shall coordinate with Southern California Edison to identify and estimate future demand for electricity and corresponding electric utility facilities required to serve local and regional growth.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Southern California Edison

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 2**

Develop public buildings and facilities which house City government activities in a functional, aesthetically pleasing, and convenient place for residents and City officials to conduct business.

#### **Program 2 A**

Design guidelines for all City government buildings should be developed to assure consistency in style and to ensure the integration of those structures with the natural and built environment.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

#### **Policy 3**

Critical structures located within the City shall be required to establish and maintain sufficient structural integrity to remain functional following the maximum earthquake and associated ground shaking at the site of the structures (Refer to Seismic Safety Element for more information.)



### **Program 3 A**

Restrict the location of critical structures and facilities (i.e. hospitals, fire, police, airport and communication facilities) from geologically and hydrologically hazardous areas whenever possible.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Engineer

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Program 3 B**

Require that all proposals for critical structures, regardless of location within the City, demonstrate safety in terms of geologic and other engineering condition of the site.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; City Engineer

**Schedule:** Immediate; Continuous.

### **Policy 4**

The City shall make every effort to assure the long-term availability of sites for the development and expansion of City buildings, utility infrastructure, and other public facilities.

### **Program 4 A**

The City shall confer and coordinate with public utilities and other public and quasi-public agencies regarding their long term needs, when periodically reviewing land use patterns and the City Land Use Map.

**Responsible Agency:** Community Development Department; Public Works Department; City Engineer; public and quasi-public agencies serving the City

**Schedule:** 2001-02; every five years

### **Policy 5**

The City shall maintain and regularly update its Capital Improvement Plan through yearly evaluation of planned and proposed Capital Improvement Projects.

### **Program 5 A**

The City shall carefully assess and, as scheduled, implement a master Capital Improvement Program through annual review and revision every five years.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council; City Manager; All City Departments

**Schedule:** Annual review; comprehensive revision every five years.

### **Policy 6**

The City of Desert Hot Springs recognizes and supports the Palm Springs Airport facilities as important and essential facilities during normal operations and in times of local emergencies.







# **CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS**

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## **COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN**

### **CHAPTER VII**

### **GLOSSARY**







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## GLOSSARY

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|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <b>ADT</b>                                 | Average Daily Trips. The total volume of traffic on a given road averaged over a 24-hour period.                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Air Basin</b>                           | A large region that shares a common geographical area and atmospheric interaction. The boundaries of an air basin are generally mountains, hills, or bodies of water.                                                                  |
| <b>Air Pollution Emissions</b>             | Discharges into the atmosphere, usually described in weight per unit of time for a given pollutant.                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Alluvium</b>                            | Soil, sand, gravel, or similar material deposited by running water, sometimes miles from its source.                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone</b> | Zones established under the California Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Act, which define potentially and/or recently active earthquake faults which could be hazardous to structures in the event of surface faulting or fault creep.   |
| <b>AQMP</b>                                | Air Quality Management Plan. A plan to achieve and maintain ambient air quality standards in jurisdictions designated by the state legislature.                                                                                        |
| <b>Aquifer</b>                             | A geologic formation which stores, transmits and yields significant quantities of water to wells and springs.                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Bikeway</b>                             | Designated facilities classified, and specifically designated, constructed and intended for the use of bicycle travel.                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Blowsand</b>                            | An environmental condition in which quantities of sand are blown in the wind. This condition may occur in areas of loose sand or sandy loam soils and strong prevailing winds.                                                         |
| <b>Buffers</b>                             | Land uses which protect public safety and provide sufficient distance and barriers between incompatible land uses by lessening the effects of noise, dust, vibration, visual blight, or other impacts caused by a particular land use. |
| <b>CDBG</b>                                | Community Development Block Grant. Federal allocation of funds to a jurisdiction for discretionary disbursement, generally utilized for local community development projects.                                                          |



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| <b>CEQA</b>                   | California Environmental Quality Act. State legislation adopted in 1970 which ensures the protection of the environment. This legislation also required California governmental agencies at all levels to develop standards and procedures necessary to protect the environmental quality of their jurisdiction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>CNEL</b>                   | Community Noise Equivalent Level. The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24 hour period, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels before 7 a.m. and after 10 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Cogeneration</b>           | The process of generating electricity using waste heat from an industrial, commercial, or manufacturing process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Conservation</b>           | The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Contiguous Development</b> | Development which is adjacent to already existing development, even if separated by roads, streets, utility easements, and railroad rights-of-way.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>CVAG</b>                   | Coachella Valley Association of Governments. An association of local governments that have jurisdiction within the Coachella Valley.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>dba</b>                    | A-weighted Sound Level. The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighted filter network. The A-weighted filter deemphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound in a manner similar to the response of the human ear, and gives good correlation with subjective reactions to noise.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Design Criteria</b>        | Specific standards and regulations which guide the design of a project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Earthquake</b>             | A shaking or trembling of the earth's crust that is volcanic or tectonic in nature.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>EIR</b>                    | Environmental Impact Report. An informational document used in the decision-making process which identifies the effects of a proposed project or activity on the natural and man-made environments. It must be prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and must address nine mandatory issues: project description, environmental setting, adverse environmental effects, short and long term use, irreversible environmental changes, growth inducement, alternatives to the project, and natural and human environmental resources. |



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| <b>Endangered Species</b>        | A species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile or invertebrate for which the prospects of survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition or disease.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Fault</b>                     | A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Fault Hazard Zone</b>         | A designated area of possible fault movement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Fuel Modification Program</b> | A fire prevention program for those developable areas surrounded by natural open space. The program should include the graduated decreases in native plant densities and the substitution of fire-resistant plants near development areas. The pattern of vegetation removal and introduction of new vegetation should be consistent with wildlife habitat conservation, thus minimizing impacts to the biological composition of the area. Provisions for continued maintenance should also be developed and implemented. |
| <b>Fire Response Time</b>        | The amount of time it takes for the fire department to respond to a first alarm fire.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Floodplain</b>                | The land areas that are subject to flooding from the 100 year flood, but not including the actual floodway.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Floodway</b>                  | The channel of a river or other watercourse and adjacent land areas necessary to discharge the waters from the 100 year flood without increasing the water surface elevation of that flood more than one foot at any point.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Freeway</b>                   | A highway upon which the abutter's right of access is controlled and which provides separated grades at intersecting streets.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>General Plan Road</b>         | Any road indicated in the Circulation Element of the General Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Geothermal Resources</b>      | The natural heat of the earth, the energy in whatever form below the surface of the earth present in, resulting from, created by, or from which may be extracted natural heat, and all minerals in solution or other products in whatever form obtained from naturally heated fluids, brines, associated gases and steam, excluding oil, hydrocarbon gas or other hydrocarbon substances.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Goal</b>                      | An expression of a general, ultimate ideal to be sought. It reflects basic community values and establishes the emphasis for formulating objectives, policies and implementation measures. They are general, often timeless, and do not lend themselves to measurement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Ground Rupture</b>            | A break in the ground's surface resulting from the movement of a fault.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |



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| <b>Groundshaking Zone</b>     | A designated area that can be expected to experience a groundshaking intensity during a maximum probable "design" earthquake.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Groundwater</b>            | Subsurface or underground water resource.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Hazardous Waste</b>        | A waste or combination of wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>High Fire Hazard Areas</b> | An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather or other fire-related condition, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Historic</b>               | Important, significant, famous or decisive in history.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Infilling</b>              | The building out or completion of development of an area before starting development of adjacent undeveloped lands.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Infrastructure</b>         | The physical systems and services which support development and people, such as streets and highways, transit services, airports, water and sewer systems, etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>LAFCO</b>                  | Local Agency Formation Commission. A State agency with the responsibility and authority to approve or deny (with or without modification) all proposals for the establishment (incorporation) of cities and special districts, reorganization or dislocation of them, and/or proposals to annex. The LAFCO must also establish a Sphere of Influence for cities and special districts. |
| <b>Land Use Category</b>      | The classification which identifies allowable land uses for a project site, based upon the availability of public services and facilities, the adequacy of the circulation system and surrounding area development.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Landfill</b>               | A system of trash and garbage disposal in which waste is buried between layers of earth to build up low-lying land.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Ldn</b>                    | Day-night sound level.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Leach Field</b>            | That portion of the septic tank system which disperses dissolved waste products into the surrounding soil.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Liquefaction</b>           | A temporary fluid condition in water-saturated loose sandy soil caused by shock, such as an earthquake. It can cause serious soil settlement, slumping, or failure of structure foundations.                                                                                                                                                                                           |



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| <b>Mitigation</b>                  | The lessening or elimination of the impacts of an action or project through changes in the proposed action or project, or the undertaking of additional measures.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>NEPA</b>                        | National Environmental Policy Act. Federal legislation passed in 1969 which insures that federal actions are not going to lessen environmental quality. This legislation also required public agencies to consider the environmental costs of their actions and provide full disclosure of environmental effects for public review and comment. |
| <b>Noise Contour</b>               | A line on and passing through points exposed to the same sound level. Contours form bands of varying widths centering around a noise source.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Noise Impacted Area</b>         | The noise impact area, in square statute miles, is the total land area within the noise impact boundary less area deemed to have a compatible land use.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>One Hundred Year Floodplain</b> | The land areas that are subject to flooding from a flood caused by a storm with the statistical likelihood of occurring once in a hundred year time span.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Open Space</b>                  | Land or water which is essentially unimproved.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Overdraft</b>                   | The condition of a groundwater basin where the amount of water withdrawn by pumping exceeds the amount of water replenishing the basin.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Paleontology</b>                | A science that deals with the life of past geologic periods and is based on the study of fossil remains of plants or animals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Percolation Test</b>            | Test of a soil's ability to absorb and permit seepage of sewage effluent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Physical Constraint</b>         | A physical feature or characteristic of land which prevents or limits the development of that land.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Policy</b>                      | A statement which sets forth guidelines for future action.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Prehistoric</b>                 | Relating to times predating written history.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Program</b>                     | Series of tasks designed to implement policies set forth in the General Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Rare Species</b>                | A species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile or invertebrate that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may be endangered if its environment worsens.                                                                                                  |



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| <b>Reclamation</b>          | The combined process of land treatment that minimizes water degradation, air pollution, damage to aquatic or wildlife habitat, flooding, erosion, and other adverse effects from surface mining operations including adverse surface effects incidental to underground mines, so that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternate land uses and creates no danger to public health and safety. |
| <b>Redevelopment Agency</b> | An agency comprised of City staff and/or elected officials, to supervise and allocate funds for the improvement of blighted or otherwise rundown areas of the City.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Retrofitting</b>         | Supplying an existing building or facility with new equipment, parts, or features, usually in an effort to improve the efficiency of energy use.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Rights-of-way</b>        | The entire width of property for the use of highways, flood and drainage works, overhead and underground utilities, or any related improvements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Road Alignment</b>       | The location of a road in relation to other roads such that they form a connected circulation system.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>RSA</b>                  | Regional Statistical Area. A group of census tracts or districts used for economic analysis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>SCAG</b>                 | The Southern California Association of Governments. An association of cities providing regional demographic and legislative information for the Southern California area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Scenic Corridor</b>      | The land area outside of the highway right-of-way within the line of sight which can be realistically subjected to protective land use controls.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Seiching</b>             | An earthquake-induced wave in a lake, reservoir or harbor.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Seismicity</b>           | The quality or state of being of, subject to, or caused by, an earthquake.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Septic Tank</b>          | A tank in which the solid matter of continuously flowing sewage is disintegrated by bacteria.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Shall</b>                | Indicates an unequivocal directive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Should</b>               | Signifies a slightly less rigid directive than "shall" to be honored in the absence of compelling considerations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Slump</b>                | Soil failure resulting from a slope, which is too steep for the soil's resistance capacity, being barren and exposed to water.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |



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| <b>Solid Waste</b>             | All solid, semisolid, and liquid wastes, including garbage, trash, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles and parts thereof, discarded home and industrial appliances, manure, vegetable or animal solid and semisolid wastes, and other discarded solid and semisolid wastes. |
| <b>Specific Plans</b>          | A tool to implement the General Plan which details land use and circulation plans for a specific site. Specific Plans are required in sensitive areas or those designated for combined commercial and residential uses.                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Spheres of Influence</b>    | The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local governmental agency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Subsidence</b>              | The gradual, local settling or sinking of the earth's surface with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence is usually the result of gas, oil, or water extraction, hydrocompaction, or peat oxidation, and not the result of a landslide or slope failure.                                                                                    |
| <b>Surface Mining</b>          | All, or any part of, the process involved in the mining of minerals on mined lands by removing overburden and mining directly from the mineral deposits, open-pit mining of minerals naturally exposed, mining by the auger method, dredging and quarrying, or surface work incidental to an underground mine.                                   |
| <b>Tectonics</b>               | Of or pertaining to the forces involved in, or the resulting structures or features of the upper part of the earth's crust.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Threatened Species</b>      | Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Transportation Corridor</b> | The area adjacent to major transportation routes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Trip Generators</b>         | Person and vehicular travel generated in accordance with the type and intensity of land use.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Water Basin</b>             | The drainage or catchment area of a stream or lake.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Watercourse</b>             | A permanent stream; intermittent stream; river, brook, creek, channel or ditch for water, whether natural or manmade.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Watershed</b>               | The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or which drains into a lake or reservoir.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Zoning</b>                  | A legal device used by local jurisdictions to control development density and insure that land uses are properly situated in relation to one another.                                                                                                                                                                                            |







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